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WILLIAM E. BRIDGES Family Patterns & Social Values
in America, 1824-1875

WILLIAM E. LEVERETTE JR. E. L. Youman's Crusade for
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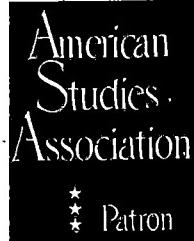
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American Quarterly

The aim of AMERICAN QUARTERLY is to aid in giving a sense of direction to studies in the culture of the United States, past and present. Editors and contributors therefore concern themselves not only with the areas of American life which they know best but with the relation of those areas to the entire American scene and to world society.

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Family Patterns and Social Values in America, 1825-1875

THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY IS PRESENTLY IN QUITE AS DISORGANIZED A STATE AS THE FAMILY ITSELF IS OFTEN SAID TO BE. THE CONCEPTUAL SOPHISTICATION OF BOTH SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL HISTORY SINCE 1920 HAS LEFT THE ONLY EXISTING SURVEY OF THIS CRUCIAL SOCIAL INSTITUTION QUITE OBSOLETE, FOR THAT SURVEY WAS PUBLISHED DURING WORLD WAR I.¹ IN NO MAJOR AREA OF AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY WILL THE INVESTIGATOR FIND SO LITTLE WORK AVAILABLE AND SO MUCH MISCONCEPTION PASSING FOR ESTABLISHED FACT. THE SITUATION IS LIKE THAT WHICH WOULD PREVAIL IF STUDY HAD STOPPED FORTY-FIVE YEARS AGO IN THE FIELDS OF RELIGIOUS OR EDUCATIONAL HISTORY. IN A SENSE THE SITUATION IS ACTUALLY WORSE THAN THAT, FOR IN DISREGARDING THE FAMILY, HISTORIANS ARE DISREGARDING WHAT MARGARET MEAD HAS CALLED "THE BASIC INSTITUTION OF SOCIETY."²

BEFORE MUCH SENSE CAN BE MADE OUT OF THE FAMILY PATTERNS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA, THE BASIC SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE FAMILY MUST BE CLEAR.³ AS THE CONTEXT INTO WHICH A CHILD IS BORN AND WITHIN WHICH HE SPENDS HIS MOST IMPRESSIONABLE YEARS, THE FAMILY PLAYS A DOUBLE SOCIAL ROLE: FIRST, IT TRANSFORMS AN ASOCIAL BIOLOGICAL ENTITY INTO A HUMAN BEING, AND BY INSTILLING IN HIM THE VALUES ENDORSED BY HIS CULTURE IT PREPARES HIM TO MEET THE DEMANDS THAT HIS SOCIETY WILL MAKE UPON HIM; SECOND, IT SERVES THEREBY TO CONVEY THE CULTURE'S VALUES ACROSS A CRITICAL GAP IN THE SOCIAL CONTINUUM—THAT SEPARATING ONE GENERATION FROM ITS SUCCESSOR—AND THUS PERPETUATES THE CULTURE ITSELF. THIS BASIC DOUBLE FUNCTION IS PERFORMED IN WAYS THAT ARE MOST APPROPRIATE TO THE VALUES OF THE CULTURE

¹ Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family* (3 vols.; Cleveland, 1915-18). Barnes and Noble reprinted this work in one volume in 1960.

² Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (New York, 1942), p. 3.

³ For an extended discussion of this subject, see Paul Schrecker, "The Family: Conveyance of Tradition," *The Family: Its Function And Destiny*, ed. Ruth Nanda Anshen (New York, 1949), pp. 406-25.

in question. The way in which a child is acculturated is the product of the very values to which he is being acculturated. If, for example, his society is organized hierarchically, the child will be instructed in social subordination by domestic subordination; if his society expects sons to follow fathers in type of work and social station, the family patterns will aim at reproducing the father in the son; if his society emphasizes the importance of getting along with and fitting into "the group," the child will be encouraged to act in such a way that he will be popular with his juvenile peers. From a society's methods of acculturation, therefore, it is possible to predict the general outlines of its value patterns; conversely, a knowledge of cultural values will help one to make an educated guess as to the domestic methods by which they could be conveyed from generation to generation.

If all this is familiar to the student of American Civilization, it can only be said that the widely held conception of what nineteenth-century American family life was like suggests otherwise. For before the historian can make much headway in the task of describing that family life and its relationship to the society of which it was a part, he must deal with a surprisingly tenacious stereotype. *Snow-Bound*, "The Old Folks at Home," Currier and Ives prints, "The Children's Hour," Rogers Groups, "Home, Sweet Home"—from hundreds of such sources comes the image of a closely-knit, stable, patriarchal, self-sustaining, well-disciplined family group. As Carl Degler has recently suggested in these pages, this kind of family forms the basis for Riesman's study of "inner-directedness" in *The Lonely Crowd*.⁴ The socialization of the child in such a family would presumably involve training in such qualities as self-control and self-denial; naturally the methods appropriate to such an end would call for considerable parental control and rigid discipline.

The person who brings such assumptions to the study of the nineteenth-century American family will find himself in a state of confusion very quickly. Surely the date of the following passage cannot be 1861; but for the diction it sounds more like 1961.

In the genuine New England home of today, still that good old-fashioned thing called *obedience* lingers. In too many homes, judging by what we see and hear, it is deemed intrusive and turned out. . . . One may gather from his own observation and experience the most atrocious instances of disrespect and misrule, such as would disgrace an age of barbarism.⁵

⁴ "The Sociologist as Historian: Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*," *American Quarterly*, XV (Winter 1963), 493-94.

⁵ *Monthly Religious Magazine* (1861), quoted in Calhoun, III, 144-45.

Nor was a mid-century writer being affected in calling obedience "old-fashioned," for Americans and Europeans had been noting its absence for more than half a century. In the 1850s the Pulskys wrote that American children "have their own way" and described them as "tumbling and dragging about books and cushions and chairs and climbing up and down just as they please."⁶ In the same decade Adam Gurowski complained of "the prodigality, the assumption, self-assertion, and conceit" of the American child.⁷ When James Fenimore Cooper listed the "defects in American deportment" twenty years earlier, he began with "insubordination in children, and a general want of respect for age."⁸ The children encountered in 1817 by De Montlezun "are absolute masters of their fates. The authority of the parents is no restraint at all."⁹ And so it goes—the endless record of those who had been jostled, bellowed at and spilled upon by the pre-Civil War American child.

It may be objected, of course, that these were mostly observers who were generally disapproving in their views of American society, so let us turn to one less suspect on this score. Tocqueville devoted a chapter of his second volume to the American family, and it is well worth reading.¹⁰ Obviously he saw the very things of which the other observers complained, but he did not confuse a lack of subordination and new patterns of training with insubordination and a lack of training. Instead he argued that the same forces that undermined the principle and practice of civil subordination also removed the need for most of the domestic subordination that was familiar to the European. He reasoned that the same principles on which the Americans had rejected the past politically and socially led them also to care less for the arbiters of and spokesmen for that past and, thus, to "the general want of respect for age" of which Cooper had complained. In keeping with his own domestic experience, he analyzed the situation in terms of the role of the father rather than that of the parents, but nonetheless many of his observations are astute. What he described was not a family in an advanced state of disintegration (as contemporary Europeans tended to) but rather a family that was being reconstructed so that it might more successfully acculturate the American child and prepare him thereby for life in his society. The kind of correlation he found between the values of American society and the patterns of its domestic life is evident when he writes,

⁶ Ferenc and Theresa Pulsky, *White, Red, Black* (1853) in *This Was America*, ed. Oscar Handlin (Cambridge, 1949), p. 239.

⁷ Quoted in Calhoun, II, 56.

⁸ *The American Democrat* (New York, 1950), p. 150.

⁹ *Voyage fait . . . de New-York à la Nouvelle-Orléans . . .*, in Handlin, p. 134.

¹⁰ "Influence of Democracy on the Family," *Democracy in America* (2 vols.; New York, 1948), II, 192-97.

When the condition of society becomes democratic and men adopt as their general principle that it is good and lawful to judge of all things for oneself, using former points of belief not as a rule of faith, but simply as a means of information, the power which the opinions of a father exercise over those of his sons diminishes as well as his legal power.¹¹

In this statement one can see the way in which Tocqueville's analysis differs from that of Riesman.¹² Whereas Riesman associates individualism with a process of close parental supervision under which the child "internalizes" parental restraints, Tocqueville associates individualism more logically with minimal parental supervision and early instruction in the importance of learning things for oneself. The complaints of most contemporary observers could be summed up in the words of an Englishwoman who wrote in 1848 that the American child "is too early his own master."¹³ Her opposition to the system was almost as much one of principle as of results. If one could forget the principle and attend to the results, he might see the sort of thing observed by another Englishwoman who reported in amazement,

Little creatures feed themselves very neatly, and are trusted with cups of glass and china, which they grasp firmly, carry about the room carefully, and deposit unbroken, at an age when, in our country mamma or nurse would be rushing after them to save the vessels from destruction.¹⁴

The only thing to add to such an account is that it seems very likely that the same child that carried the cup with such care also infuriated other visitors who tried to be helpful by taking it away from him. One suspects that much of the "willfulness" noted in the American child was triggered by the behavior toward him of the visitor who observed it.

It is significant, of course, that many of the criticisms of the American child's independence were voiced by those who found American men presumptuous, materialistic and restless. For the children were being fitted for life in a society whose main outlines were dangerous by European standards. It is interesting to compare the kind of child that we have been describing with the conclusions that several historians have reached about the demands made on the individual by society in this

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹² Cf. Degler's statement that "Calhoun's chapter on 'The Career of the Child' has almost no point of contact with the view of the inner-directed child presented by Riesman." Degler, p. 493.

¹³ Quoted in Calhoun, II, 67.

¹⁴ Calhoun, II, 55.

period and the kind of man who was best suited to meet them. In his study of the effects of economic abundance on the American character, David Potter wrote,

Historically, as new lands, new forms of wealth, new opportunities, came into play, clamoring to be seized upon, America developed something of a compulsion to make use of them. The man best qualified for this role was the completely mobile man, moving freely from one locality to the next, from one economic position to another, or from one social level to levels above. . . . In a country where the entire environment was to be transformed with the least possible delay . . . mobility became not merely an optional privilege but almost a mandatory obligation, and the man who failed to meet this obligation had, to a certain extent, defaulted in his duty to society.¹⁵

Potter's conclusion is supported by that of another historian whose approach and purposes are very different; in his study of Jacksonian democracy Marvin Meyers wrote,

The central economic figure is . . . the speculative enterpriser who scents distant opportunities and borrows or invents the means for grasping them. A preference for high-risk, high-gain transactions is found at all economic levels. . . . Thus the American, in his urgent quest for gain and advancement, becomes to many witnesses the very opposite of the sturdy, stable citizen-producer; becomes an adventurer steered only by a bold imagination.¹⁶

To Potter's "completely mobile man" and Meyers' "adventurer" we may add the Adamic figure of self-containment described by R. W. B. Lewis as "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untroubled and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race."¹⁷

The composite image that can be formed from these three figures is very close, I would submit, to the image of man that the nineteenth-century acculturation practices were designed to produce. This impression is supported, moreover, by the findings of Daniel Miller and Guy Swanson, who summed up their survey of nineteenth-century child-guidance literature by identifying the following as one of the central and unifying themes in it:

the notion that a youngster must be able independently to go out into the urban world, to capitalize on such opportunities as it may present, to carve out a life for himself which, in a rapidly changing society,

¹⁵ *People of Plenty* (Chicago, 1954), pp. 96-97.

¹⁶ *The Jacksonian Persuasion* (New York, 1960), p. 137.

¹⁷ *The American Adam* (Chicago, 1955), p. 5.

may well require different tasks to be performed than were required of his parents. His is to be the active, manipulative approach to people and things.¹⁸

This statement may remind the reader of Riesman's figure, the inner-directed man; and assuredly the self-reliance and self-direction that Riesman emphasizes are present. What is also present and what has not been hitherto sufficiently remarked is a cluster of values that can be described as impersonality and emotional nondependence. The enemy of mobility is not only a static social structure but also the personal attachments that the individual develops in such a structure. Individualism, in these terms, is not so much an intellectual freedom as it is an emotional disengagement from others. This disengagement was an important element in Emersonian individualism.¹⁹ What appeared to many observers to be domestic disintegration and lack of strong emotional ties within the family is better understood as training in detachment.²⁰

The relationship between domestic practices and their social context in this matter of emotional independence was reciprocal. That is, the patterns of acculturation can be studied as both results and causes of an increasingly atomistic, impersonal, competitive socio-economic order. One area in which this two-way relationship is evident is that of paternal participation in family life. Contemporary reports make it clear that fathers were playing less and less of a part in domestic activities as their work took them out of the home for the major part of the day. In this matter as in so many like it, modern historians have underestimated the similarities between past and present—similarities that are clear in such a passage as this, written in 1860:

The pressure upon a multitude of business and professional men is really frightful; combined with the necessity in many cases of going long distances to their places of duty, it produces little short of an absolute separation from their families.²¹

Not only is this the product of socialization along patterns of emotional independence; it also encourages such patterns in the next generation by fragmenting the family and by placing the father's central social concerns outside the domestic context.

¹⁸ *The Changing American Parent* (New York, 1958), p. 40.

¹⁹ "Let us feel if we will the absolute insulation of man . . . Let us even bid our dearest friends farewell, and defy them, saying 'Who are you? Unhand me: I will be dependent no more.'" *Emerson: A Modern Anthology*, eds. Alfred Kazin and Daniel Aaron (New York, 1958), p. 168.

²⁰ For reports of such "coolness," see Calhoun, II, 131-33.

²¹ *Monthly Religious Magazine* (1860), in Calhoun, III, 187.

It would be a mistake to assume, however, that this training in detachment was wholly successful, for one of the striking features of nineteenth-century family life resulted from its partial failure. There is plentiful evidence that striving to be the "completely mobile man" was a lonely and frustrating task. What Miller and Swanson called "the active, manipulative approach to people and things" dehumanizes not only others but oneself as well. The economic roles filled by these men were often narrow and not conducive to broad self-fulfillment. The problem and its bearing on family life have been described thus by Margaret Mead:

In much of his ordinary adult activity, the individual expresses his personality in a segmented fashion. One aspect finds expression in his work or profession; another may be elicited from his social and recreational interests; still another may be called forth in his religious life. In the intimacies of family association, on the other hand, the entire personality is capable of integrated expression and receives response in terms of the whole rather than its parts.²²

Here is another area in which the differences between the last century and this have been emphasized at the expense of the similarities. For although the social scientist's vocabulary would have been foreign to the nineteenth-century American, the notion behind the words would not. In the best-selling *Reveries of a Bachelor* (1850) the narrator decides that among the many attractions of home life to a man, the greatest is "the ecstasy of the conviction, that *there* at least you are beloved; that *there* you are understood; that *there* your errors will meet even with the gentlest forgiveness . . . ; and that *there* you may be entirely and joyfully—yourself."²³

According to this view the home became a retreat from the world, a shelter from the impersonality and competitiveness of the society that surrounded it. This is, of course, the domestic image that fills the poetry and visual art of the period and is, thus, the source of the stereotype of nineteenth-century home life. In practice, however, the notion of home-as-retreat could only confuse domestic life, for it burdened the institution that was preparing children to face their society's demands with the task of rehabilitating adults that found those demands too great.

This confusion was compounded by another that stemmed from the father's absorption in extradomestic activity. In his absence the task of child raising, the acculturation process, fell largely to the mother. This

²² Mead, p. 17.

²³ [Donald Grant Mitchell], *Reveries of a Bachelor* (New York, 1852), p. 90. See also the quotation from a *McGuffey Reader* in Richard D. Mosier, *Making the American Mind* (New York, 1947), p. 28.

shift of responsibility might have had less impact on our culture if, at the same time, the vigorous reform movements active in the society had not turned to the American mother and the acculturation process over which she presided as their best avenue of advancement. Mothers were barraged with a many-sided campaign to save the world by means of the family.²⁴ While the specific goals of the campaign were as various as the groups engaged in it, one of them deserves our notice. Its central figure was the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book*, the influential Sarah Josepha Hale, and its purpose is evident in the following passage from one of Mrs. Hale's editorials:

In this country, there being no established rank and privileged class, wealth has been found to be the surest letter of introduction into the highest and most polished circles. . . . There is a cramping and debasing influence exerted by this systematic, absorbing pursuit after wealth. . . . And here it is that our country needs the power of female talent to be exerted, the efficiency of moral training to be tested. Let this besetting sin of our times be studiously watched by the Christian mother. Let us guard against this insidious influence of Mammon.²⁵

Mothers were being urged, in short, to undermine the very pattern of values that the emerging economic order demanded.

The resulting tension between the values of the success ethic and those of Mrs. Hale's crusade did little to further domestic solidarity. But in the period between 1825 and 1875 it did achieve a precarious balance that was important. The home and the market place became the foci of opposite sets of values, one stultifyingly static and the other recklessly dynamic. Each was the more extreme for the presence of the other, while each acted as a brake on the other. The result was a tense amalgam of advance-with-safety, progress-with-restraint, exploit-with-control. It is the pattern of checks and balances that one finds in Howells' *The Rise of Silas Lapham* in which the male principle of material advancement is restrained by the female principle of moral advancement.

The hold of this polarity between home and market place upon the American imagination is considerable, even today. But just as the last quarter of the nineteenth century brought public criticism of the market as a threat to the individual, so the same period saw a disenchantment with the home on the same score. Huck Finn's flight from social control at both the beginning and the end of the novel is an escape from

²⁴ See Anne L. Kuhn, *The Mother's Role in Childhood Education: New England Concepts, 1830-1860* (New Haven, 1947).

²⁵ Quoted in Meade Minnigerode, *The Fabulous Forties: 1840-1850* (New York, 1924), p. 131.

the domestic context. "Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it"²⁶—this is the complaint lodged against an institution and a set of values that it seeks to convey.

Yet even these attitudes are not new. The same narrator of *Reveries of a Bachelor* who depicted the home as a happy retreat decided finally to remain a bachelor because of the freedom he enjoyed in that state. Describing his house, he writes

I take a vast deal of comfort in treating it just as I choose. I manage to break some article of furniture, almost every time I pay it a visit; and if I cannot open the window readily of a morning . . . I knock out a pane or two of glass with my boot.

He concludes that his behavior would "make a prim housewife fret herself into a raging fever."²⁷ His attitudes, though much more self-conscious, are like those of Huck, who announced, "there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't."²⁸

In comparing Huck's sentiments with those of the mid-century "bachelor," I am again suggesting that attitudes that we often consider modern do, in fact, run back well into the nineteenth century. Throughout the period the American family was equipping new generations to fit the social patterns described by Potter, Meyers and Lewis—an activity on which we have far too little information. At the same time the family, under maternal guidance, was serving as a counterweight to the effects of those values and as a retreat from the confusion they often produced. Most of our misconceptions about the nineteenth-century family come from assuming that its second, compensatory role was its only role. But the family's primary role, as we began by noting, is the acculturation of children. And until we know far more than we do now about the way in which the nineteenth-century American family functioned, vitally important pages will be missing from the historical record.

²⁶ Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (New York, 1948), p. 293.

²⁷ Mitchell, p. 16.

²⁸ Mark Twain, p. 116.



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E. L. Youmans' Crusade for Scientific Autonomy and Respectability

IN THE EARNEST MANNER CHARACTERISTIC OF THE VICTORIANS, EDWARD L. Youmans' famed *Popular Science Monthly* was dedicated to the conviction that the scientist's search for truth within a naturalistic frame of reference deserved both autonomy and the status society habitually reserved for the activities of statesmen, soldiers, clergymen and men of letters.¹ That scientists were not granted comparable respect as such professions, that they were labeled "infidel," "materialist" and "atheist" is implicit in many of the articles appearing in the magazine. Usually explicit is the certainty that science is the way to truth, at times only particular truths, at times all the truth that matters. Founded by Youmans in 1872 and edited by him until his death in 1887, the magazine waged a kind of crusade, approaching the zeal of religion in its verbal intensity, to establish for science and its practitioners the respect Youmans thought they should enjoy among his contemporaries.²

¹ The role of the *Popular Science Monthly* in the impact of science on American thought in the last quarter of the nineteenth century has often been recognized. For examples, see Henry Steele Commager, *The American Mind* (New Haven, 1950) p. 86; Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York, 1943), pp. 553, 570, 593; Richard Hofstadter, *Social Darwinism in American Thought* (rev. ed.; Boston, 1955), pp. 22-23, 45; and a general article, not analytical in nature, Charles M. Haar, "E. L. Youmans; A Chapter in the Diffusion of Science in America," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, IX (1948), 193-213. The present writer's dissertation, "Science and Values: A Study of Edward L. Youmans' *Popular Science Monthly*, 1872-1887" (Vanderbilt University, 1963), is available on microfilms from University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor.

² Published by D. Appleton and Co., the *Popular Science Monthly* was edited by Youmans and his brother William Jay Youmans alone from 1887 to 1900, and by James McKeen Cattell, a Columbia University psychologist, from 1900 to 1915. The name, *Popular Science Monthly*, was sold in 1915 to the Modern Publishing Company of New York, and the magazine or magazines published under that name since then have been entirely different in character from Youmans' *Popular Science Monthly*, hereinafter designated in the notes as *PSM*, when it is not clear from the text that an article is from that source.

The crusade, however, was more than a counterattack against a stronger and older enemy who had held the field for centuries. It was the battlecry as well of an army which had begun to taste victory, whose warriors had come to see their banners fly alongside others which had long represented Western ideals and values. The crusaders were, as Matthew Arnold said, the "friends of physical science . . . in its meridian radiance." Arnold spoke of a "sort of crusade with the friends of physical science—a busy host, important in itself, important because of the gifted leaders who march at its head, important from its strong and increasing hold upon public favor."³ Such an admission was gratifying, coming as it did from a leading knight in one of the opposing camps—the elegant cavalry of belles-lettres and culture.

The word which best defines the general concept or outlook which Youmans wanted to persuade his readers to accept is "nature," and the natural law which overrode all others was evolution. As Arthur O. Lovejoy pointed out, while it is always difficult to establish the clear meaning of such abstract words in any one historical context, their very vagueness is of value to the historian because such words become pat formulae round which any number of ideas are grouped.⁴ It is the function of the historian of ideas to try to establish all the varied and sometimes contradictory connotations which such abstract sentiments carry. Whatever the difficulties of precise definition, the *Popular Science Monthly* had as a chief object of its crusade making the naturalistic point of view a framework for the study of all concerns that come within human vision. Praising his philosophical hero, Herbert Spencer, Youmans wrote that Spencer's genius lay in showing the uniformity of the law of evolution throughout nature. Spencer had demonstrated "a gradual and continuous unfolding" which could be observed in the realms of "life, mind, man, science, art, language, morality, society, government, and institutions."⁵

Youmans' statement of purpose at the inception of the magazine exemplifies his view of the wide applicability of scientific method as well as his optimistic scientism. He defined science as the most accurate knowledge obtainable of the order of nature. Science, a "method of the mind," included in addition to changes in physical phenomena, the "characters" of men, ethics and social and political systems. All subjects having "accessible and observable phenomena, one causing another" were subject to scientific investigation, which was the "common interest of rational beings" who wished thought to be "brought into the exactest harmony

³ "Literature and Science," *PSM*, XXI (1882), 787.

⁴ *The Great Chain of Being* (New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1960), p. 14.

⁵ "Herbert Spencer and the Doctrine of Evolution," *PSM*, VI (1874), 25.

with things. . . ." The achievements of science in leading men to an enjoyment of nature's "beautiful order" and in helping them to escape "baneful superstitions" were far greater than the practical advances of science. In closing, Youmans devoted the *Popular Science Monthly* to advancing the hold of scientific method over the great speculative interests which had always captured the imagination.⁶

Although there are the exceptions to be expected in a periodical, the general lines of the naturalistic philosophy promoted in the *Popular Science Monthly* are clear enough. First, the magazine crusaded for natural as opposed to supernatural, theological or metaphysical explanations of natural events—meaning that nature was to be viewed as sufficient unto itself. Its matter, motion and laws did not require the invocation of outside powers, those not open to empirical investigation, to explain the behavior of phenomena.⁷ Second, nature was governed by a vast network of regular laws open, eventually, to human knowledge. Nature knew no caprice, chance or disorder.⁸ Third, nature was a unity in which both organic and inorganic partook of the same basic matter and followed the same laws.⁹

Finally, it was argued that both man and mind must be focused under the light of scientific method. Man possessed a physico-chemical organization following the laws of matter. As a member of the animal kingdom, man had undergone evolutionary change. Thinking was centered in the brain and nervous system which were open to the research techniques of the physiologist and chemist. Mind, like life, was no mysterious entity given existence by miraculous forces; rather it was rooted in the matter

⁶ Editor's Table, "Purpose and Plan of Our Enterprise," I (1872), 113-14. See the similar statement in XII (1877), 110.

⁷ For examples, see: William D. Le Sueur, "A Defense of Modern Thought," XXIV (1883-84), 780-93; Andrew Dickson White, "New Chapters in the Warfare of Science," XXVII (1885), 735; E. L. Youmans, "Spencer and the Doctrine of Evolution," VI (1874), 22-23; Thomas H. Huxley, "The Interpreters of Genesis and the Interpreters of Nature," XXVIII (1885-86), 449-60; Editor's Table, "The Religious Recognition of Nature," XIV (1879), 392-95.

⁸ E. L. Youmans, A. R. Grote and others, "On Science-Teaching in the Public Schools," XXIII (1883), 209; John W. Draper, "Evolution, Its Origin, Progress, and Consequences," XII (1877), 175-92; Edward S. Morse, "What American Zoologists Have Done for Evolution," X (1876), 181-98; E. Lewis Jr., "Croll on Climate and Time," VII (1875), 719-26.

⁹ S. P. Langley, "The Photosphere and Sun-Spots," V (1874), 532-42; Charles V. Riley, "The Grape Phylloxera," V (1874), 1-16; Ira Remsen, "The Artificial Preparation of Organic Bodies," VII (1875), 726-32; "Pasteur on Fermentation," VII (1876), 709-19, an abridgment of two papers by Pasteur; John Tyndall, "Spontaneous Generation," XII (1878), 476-88, 591-604; W. K. Brooks, "The Differences Between Animals and Plants," XIV (1878), 30-39; William S. Barnard, "Micro-Organisms and Their Effects on Nature," XV (1879), 764-72; George F. Barker, "Modern Aspects of the Life-Question," XVII (1880), 750-68.

which made up the body.¹⁰ There was, of course, great reluctance among Victorians to entertain the idea that mind, its thoughts and productions, such as religion, ethics, poetry and art, were merely results of the operation of material forces, and charges that it was grossly materialistic were hurled at science. In editorials and through the articles it carried, the *Popular Science Monthly* defended science from such charges or praised it for offering a more exalted view of the mind than that presented by other philosophical systems.

The concern of science with matter and motion was the only proper course and did not imply a reduction to "lower" gross matter of "higher" phenomena such as mental activity, said one writer, who argued that it was as easy for God to make matter think as to make mind.¹¹ There was a "healthy materialism" which was founded in nature, declared one editorial. Those who held such a view did not claim to know what matter was but did believe that "mental manifestations are governed by physical conditions. . . ." ¹² The most frequent explanation of the relation of mind and matter was that the two were parallel phenomena, but that the relation between them was a mystery.¹³

Materialism would not rob life of dignity, said the editor. It had been shown that while mechanical explanations were at the "basis of all things, in the actual evolution of the universe, relations of a much higher and more complex order have been established. . . ." Pure materialists reduced everything to matter and thus to nothing, but Spencer had demonstrated matter to be a manifestation of the Unknown. Why adopt an explanation of life and mind in their lowest rather than in their highest terms? asked the editor. Man, a moral and rational being, had come out of nature and its matter.¹⁴ What had developed was, after all, more important than its origins: such was a healthy materialism. Some writers

¹⁰ Editor's Table, "Harris on Social Science," XV (1879), 703; Edward B. Tylor, "Recent Anthropology," XVI (1879), 157; Armand De Quatrefages, "Natural History of Man," I (1872), 74; T. H. Huxley, "The Progress of Anthropology," XIII (1878), 668-76; Francis J. Shepherd, "The Significance of Human Anomalies," XXV (1884), 721-32; Editor's Table, "The Study of the Brain," XIII (1878), 237-41; Robert W. Lovett, "The Development of the Senses," XXI (1882), 34-37; Walter Hale Walshe, "Physiology versus Metaphysics," XXV (1884), 249-58; W. R. Benedict, "The Nervous System and Consciousness," I (1872), 544-64.

¹¹ Henry Maudsley, "Materialism and Its Lessons," PSM, XV (1879), 674.

¹² "A Healthy Materialism," XXVI (1885), 410.

¹³ R. G. Eccles, "The Radical Fallacy of Materialism," XIII (1878), 354-60; John Tyndall, "Virchow and Evolution," XIV (1879), 284-85; T. H. Huxley, "On Sensation . . .," XV (1879), 86-100; George J. Allman, "Protoplasm and Life," XV (1879), 749; Peter Bryce, "The Future of Mind," XXI (1882), 243-44.

¹⁴ Editor's Table, "The Bad Logic of Materialism," XXVI (1885), 701-3.

affirmed that the mind was the highest reach of the evolutionary process, which was often described as God's process of creation.¹⁵

While most of the scientists and polemicists in the cause of science who wrote in the *Popular Science Monthly* were firm in their insistence that nature must be interpreted on its own terms by those best fitted to do so, many writers also displayed a desire, especially where not only man and mind but also the phenomenon of life was concerned, to steer clear of any purely mechanistic or materialistic view of nature, especially if determinism was implied. The phenomena of nature were open to physical investigation, they said, but science knew only the phenomenal, only that which was observable by the senses—beyond which was, or at least might be, a mystery, or some unknown ultimate. But many writers also warned that such metaphysical mysteries were not to be used as arguments against the scientific method and a naturalistic outlook.

For example, the *Popular Science Monthly* carried an address by Darwin's great champion, Thomas H. Huxley, in which he paused to defend himself against charges that he was a materialist. The accusation dated back to his famous speech, "On the Physical Basis of Life," which had driven the February 1869 number of the *Fortnightly Review* to seven printings. He had not then, argued Huxley, said that all organisms were composed of an identical life matter; nor had he said that life was *only* chemical.¹⁶ He pointed out that he had stressed the chemical basis in protoplasm of all forms of life, but he had warned his audience not to take materialistic implications from his remarks. The reason he gave was epistemological: science was only a useful symbolic representation of nature; science dealt in laws but not necessity (determinism) which could only be, he said, "an empty shadow of my own mind's throwing." Man need not be bound by his material kinship with nature. Mixing philosophy of science with traditional faith in the efficacy of moral action, Huxley would make the best of a world filled with ignorance and evil by resting in two beliefs—"the first that the order of nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition counts for something in the course of events."¹⁷

¹⁵ Joseph Le Conte, "Instinct and Intelligence," VII (1875), 653-64; Le Conte, "Science and Mental Improvement," XIII (1878), 96-101; Le Conte, "Scientific Relation of Sociology to Biology," XIV (1879), 325-36, 425-34; Editor's Table, "Dr. Fairbairn and the Synthetic Philosophy," XIX (1881), 849.

¹⁶ "Yeast," *PSM*, I (1872), 584-85.

¹⁷ "On the Physical Basis of Life," *Fortnightly Review*, V (1869), 129-45. Quotations from pp. 144-45. Cyril Bibby, *T. H. Huxley* (New York, 1960), discusses the address and its impact. In the "Physical Basis" address, Huxley foreshadowed the position he was later to take in his celebrated Romanes Lecture of 1892, "Evolution and Ethics."

Huxley's ambivalent attitude that life must be studied chemically but that it was not necessarily and only materialistic was shared by other authors in the *Popular Science Monthly*. Only the scientist should handle the questions of life's origins, nature, evolution and processes, they said, but the scientist's knowledge stops at the boundary of the phenomenal. One writer stated that the laws of "molecular dynamics," the conservation of energy and the correlation of forces, were "competent to solve the dynamical problems of vital and physical phenomena."¹⁸ But science studied only "sensible phenomena," and how molecular motions could produce consciousness was a question beyond the limits of science, as was the cause of life, a question which transcended "all analysis." Present concepts of molecular dynamics, furthermore, were adequate if they explained a considerable number of observable phenomena, and present scientific concepts would no doubt change.¹⁹

A president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, whose address upon retiring was reprinted in the *Popular Science Monthly*, likewise claimed the subject of life for the special domain of science. Vitalists were wrong in assuming that scientists could not solve this question, the answer to which could not long be in doubt. There was "not the slightest proof" that life was not a property of matter. Life had no "mysterious passage, no sacred precincts" closed to the "unhallowed foot of Science," and eventually all organic functions would be explained as physical or chemical. But such materialism was tempered by the flight into poetic metaphor with which the address closed, with its images of the sun's energy moving the winds, quickening the muscle of the animal fleeing from the hunter, giving voice to a crying babe, and energizing Leonardo to paint. What the sun's energy did in other worlds was unknown to science, which did not penetrate beyond the "veil of the seen," a hope reserved to religion!²⁰

By such backhanded admissions that religion had its own realms of knowledge the *Popular Science Monthly* sought to avoid the charge that science was materialistic. Its authors used many means in reconciling the scientific approach with the more traditional supernatural approaches of the Victorian age. A scientific concept, for example, could be clothed in poetic rhetoric and thus spiritualized, or even equated with some spiritual existence. John Trowbridge, a professor of physics at Harvard,

in which he accepted an evolving and amoral universe but made man's ethical dignity depend on pitting himself against the forces of nature. See his *Collected Essays* (London, 1898), IX, 46-86.

¹⁸ L. R. Curtiss, "Molecular Dynamics," XIV (1879), 374.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 379.

²⁰ George F. Barker, "Modern Aspects of the Life-Question," XVII (1880), 750-68.

would allow no identification of mind and soul with purely physical processes. Insisting that he was staying within the bounds of legitimate scientific conjecture, Trowbridge said that physical laws could not explain life and the development of mind and morals. Science had to assume other forces, and Trowbridge argued that analogy with the sun's energy suggested a spirit immanent in nature. Such a great "source of life and mind" energized the universe and established a "vast scheme for the survival of the fittest."²¹ This idea, Trowbridge concluded, was consistent with New Testament teachings, but such supernaturalistic science was bluntly attacked by another writer in the *Popular Science Monthly*, for whom the study of mind was strictly a study of concomitant phenomena.²² Occasionally, the *Popular Science Monthly* opened its pages even to frank supernaturalists.²³

Probably the most flamboyant attempt to derive spiritual meaning from science by a direct equation of scientific concepts with older supernaturalistic ideas was contained in an article by a young French chemist, Fernand Papillon, who was praised by the *Popular Science Monthly* for his brilliant writing.²⁴ Papillon's argument is well-nigh impossible to paraphrase. He believed in the value of intuition, a kind of sudden mental leap, as a part of scientific thinking. Such a leap he made himself, identifying atoms and the ether with a basic energy, or "soul," underlying both. Conceiving the human soul as composed of the same energy, Papillon was able to arrive at a philosophy he called "a kind of spiritualistic dynamism," and he argued that his views of the laws and concepts of science strengthened and validated ancient moral and religious convictions. He went so far as to find in science the strongest proofs of the soul's immortality and God's rule of the universe that could be adduced—"Meditation on the constitution of matter is the best method of teaching us to know spirit. . . ."²⁵

But such philosophies, combining physical concepts with psychological yearnings, rested on the flimsiest of foundations, argued J. B. Stallo, who characterized one of Papillon's metaphorical passages as "sheer non-

²¹ "On the Annihilation of the Mind," X (1877), 715-18. But in another article Trowbridge was firm in his demand that the clergy not interfere with science. "Science from the Pulpit," VI (1875), 735-39.

²² Frances Emily White, "Matter and Mind," XI (1877), 183-85.

²³ C. B. Radcliffe, "Evolution and Mind," III (1873), 359-63; Rowland G. Hazard, "Animals not Automata," VI (1875), 405-20; Elliott Coues, "Imagination," XI (1877), 455-61.

²⁴ "Death of Fernand Papillon," IV (1874), 627. Papillon also wrote "Ferments, Fermentation, and Life," *PSM*, V (1874), 542-46, in which he supported Pasteur's arguments in opposition to the theory of spontaneous generation.

²⁵ "The Constitution of Matter," III (1873), 564.

sense."²⁶ Stallo's searching analysis of nineteenth-century physics, *Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics* (1882), has elicited scholarly interest in the twentieth century, especially for his anticipation of relativity.²⁷ Parts of the book appeared serially in the *Popular Science Monthly*.²⁸ His philosophy of science is one of the most sophisticated analyses of the assumptions on which physical knowledge rested to appear in that periodical. By implication Stallo's views undermine much of the uncritical optimism about the certainty and wide applicability of scientific ways of thought which characterized the magazine. Although Stallo was concerned strictly with physical theory apart from theological or other considerations, he regarded as "utterly hopeless" all attempts to explain life by mechanistic concepts.²⁹ The mechanism of his day, he wanted to show, was a naive metaphysics rooted in the thought of Newton and no longer useful to science. Physical phenomena were not to be explained as "spatial interactions between physical constants called molecules, or atoms."³⁰ The atomic theory was particularly weak by the standards which ought to govern sound scientific hypotheses, since it misrepresented many of the facts of nature, explained others poorly, and even at times contradicted experience. The idea that the atom was the basic constituent of reality, he said, was "one of those spurious figments of the brain. . . ."³¹

Stallo's analysis of the mechanistic physical theories of his day served to reveal his own philosophy of science. First, he eschewed the assumption of any isolated absolutes in nature, such as matter, force, time and space, concepts only valid in specific relationships. Despite his denial of the independent existence of conventionally accepted absolutes, Stallo asserted that the object of scientific knowledge was a real world, but a real world made up of a vast network of relationships constituting the totality of nature. By abstracting parts of this totality for study, the scientist could understand this "relativity of objective reality." He would have to make use of "concepts," "fictions" or "hypotheses," but he must not confuse them with metaphysical reality. Even "inconceivable" concepts, Stallo said, disagreeing with Herbert Spencer, could be used successfully

26 "The Primary Concepts of Modern Physical Science," *PSM*, IV (1873-74), 103.

27 Ernst Cassirer, *The Problem of Knowledge* (New Haven, 1950), 100-1; Herbert W. Schneider, *A History of American Philosophy* (New York, 1946), 332, 417; review of Stallo, *Concepts and Theories of Modern Physics* (reprint of 3rd U. S. ed. of 1888; Cambridge, 1960), in *Scientific American*, CCII (June 1960), 194, 196. This latest edition has an introduction by the physicist Percy W. Bridgman, well-known for his operationalist view of the nature of scientific theories.

28 "The Primary Concepts of Modern Physical Science," III (1873), 705-17; IV (1873-74), 92-108; 219-31; 349-61.

29 *Ibid.*, III, 706.

30 *Ibid.*, III, 705.

31 *Ibid.*, III, 716.

by science if such ideas led to an expansion of knowledge by guiding and stimulating research. Warning the scientist not to mistake his particular view of nature for the real universe, Stallo said that it was as right to say that the earth fell toward the apple as vice versa. But he deplored both nominalism and pure empiricism.³² His plea for relativism is explicit in the following:

There is no absolute material quality, no absolute material substance, no absolute physical unit, no absolutely simple physical entity, no absolute constant, no absolute standard either of quantity or quality, no absolute motion, no absolute rest, no absolute time, no absolute space.³³

In a universe in perpetual change, how could there be independent absolutes? In Stallo's opinion, then, scientific knowledge ideally was knowledge of a real world, but in constant need of expansion and correction because of the relative quality dictated by the very nature of the reality science tried to explain.

Emil Du Bois-Reymond, the Berlin pioneer in electrophysiology, was critical in a different way of the assumptions of scientific knowledge.³⁴ He doubted whether science could ever answer certain ultimate questions. In articles published in the *Popular Science Monthly*, originally often addresses before scientific societies, Du Bois-Reymond questioned and commented upon a wide range of scientific subjects with reference especially to epistemological conditions. He ranged from evolution to comments on the atomic theory, "a useful fiction," he said, in theoretical physics. Writing on the significance of the work of Darwin, Du Bois-Reymond admitted that Darwin had indeed created a revolution in thought, but his greatest service had been in relieving scientists of the philosophical problems which arose from mechanistic views of a nature which often seemed to demonstrate purposive design. As Darwin's two leading concepts, descent with modifications and natural selection, did not demand the assumption of design as an explanatory principle, scientists could now face design as well as lack of design as facts of observation wherever found, not as theoretical requirements or problems. Teleology was no longer a tenable assumption, but the concept of design could serve as a useful tool in examining structures.³⁵

³² *Ibid.*, IV, 96-102.

³³ *Ibid.*, IV, 225.

³⁴ "Sketch of Professor Du Bois-Reymond," *PSM*, XIII (1878), 360-64; Cassirer, *Problem of Knowledge*, p. 188; George Gaylord Simpson, Colin S. Pittendrigh, and Lewis H. Tiffany, *Life: An Introduction to Biology* (New York, 1957), p. 810; H. T. Pledge, *Science Since 1500* (New York, 1959), p. 236.

³⁵ "Darwin vs. Galiani," *PSM*, XIV (1879), 409-25.

Du Bois-Reymond was especially concerned to point out the limitations of mechanical assumptions about nature in dealing with certain problems he considered "transcendent." He eventually compiled a list of seven of these "riddles": (1) the ultimate nature of matter and force, (2) the origin of motion, (3) the origin of life, (4) the "apparently teleological arrangements of nature," not an "absolutely transcendent riddle," (5) the origin of simple sensations, "a quite transcendent" question, (6) the origin of intelligent thought and language, which might be known if the origin of sensations could be known, and (7) the question of free-will.³⁶

Although the *Popular Science Monthly* praised him for being "eager to reduce physiology to applied chemistry, natural philosophy, and mathematics," Du Bois-Reymond himself was acutely aware of the limitations of the mechanico-mathematical assumptions on which scientists based their research.³⁷ But he was firm in insisting that the only scientific knowledge was the "physico-mathematical," however "beggarly a substitute that may be for true knowledge." The scientist would have to "assume the attitude of resignation toward the ultimate principles of things. . . ." It was the pursuit of truth rather than its capture which glorified science, and the duty of the scientist was to work toward the truth, whatever the limits.³⁸ Like Huxley, then, Du Bois-Reymond was willing to face limitations to scientific knowledge, and especially to find the stern inner voice of duty, not derivable from nature, be it noted, as the most compelling value of science.

Any discussion of the *Popular Science Monthly* relative to the philosophy of science evokes the name of Charles Sanders Peirce, the introverted genius who was one of the founders of pragmatism, but who changed the name of his philosophy to pragmaticism after William James put his own interpretive stamp on Peirce's ideas.³⁹ Peirce's famous

³⁶ "The Seven World Problems," *PSM*, XX (1882), 438-47. See also, "The Limits of Our Knowledge of Nature," *PSM*, V (1874), 17-32.

³⁷ "Sketch of . . . Du Bois-Reymond," XIII (1878), 361.

³⁸ "Darwin vs. Galiani," *PSM*, XIV (1879), 423, 425. Ernst Cassirer, in a discussion of how late nineteenth and early twentieth-century advances in physics dealt a blow to the naive assumptions of mechanism, pointed out that Du Bois-Reymond's limits were only such on the assumption that the ideal form of scientific knowledge was mechanistic physics. *Problem of Knowledge*, 81-117.

³⁹ The literature on Peirce (1839-1914) has grown rapidly since about 1915. In this study, I have consulted the following: Justus Buchler, ed., *Philosophical Writings of Peirce* (New York, 1955); Philip P. Wiener, ed., *Values in a Universe of Chance: Selected Writings of Charles S. Peirce* (New York, 1958); Wiener, *Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism* (Cambridge, 1949), pp. 70-96; Morris Cohen, *American Thought*, pp. 75, 268-71; W. B. Gallie, *Peirce and Pragmatism* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1952); Edward H. Madden, "Charles Sanders Peirce's Search for a Method," in Madden, ed.,

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essay, "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," appeared in the magazine as part of a series entitled "Illustrations of the Logic of Science."⁴⁰ It was here that Peirce stated his dictum for determining the meaning of ideas and statements: "Consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."⁴¹

More than any other writer in the *Popular Science Monthly*, the controversial Peirce should not be examined solely on the basis of the six articles appearing in that magazine. Further, since his fame is more the product of the present century, his concepts of scientific logic cannot be taken as representative of the prevailing ideas in the *Popular Science Monthly*. His ideas on the uniformity of nature, for example, are certainly different from the majority and editorial view. Aware of the implications of the question for religion, Peirce said that some scientific hypothesis would have to be advanced to explain any "remarkable and universal orderliness" found in nature. But if nature showed no order, apparent benevolence or beauty, then "emancipated" minds could not be expected to accept any theories of a universal design by a "governor." But, on examination, Peirce averred the universe turned out to be neither a "mere chance medley" nor an "exact poem." Nature showed both orderly patterns and chance patterns, and Peirce went to some lengths to explain why the uniformity of nature could not be the logical assumption for scientific induction.⁴²

Peirce's theory of induction is a specialized subject of interest to twentieth-century philosophers of science, but his general view of the value and validity of scientific method is less technical and shares in the main article of faith held by the *Popular Science Monthly*. No nominalist, he believed that science possessed a method employing terms descriptive of an objectively real world; in theory, at least, science could describe real-

Theories of Scientific Method (Seattle, 1960), pp. 248-62. Important but open largely to specialists in mathematics is Murray G. Murphrey, *The Development of Peirce's Philosophy* (Cambridge, 1961). Murphrey ascribes Peirce's failure to articulate the fragments of his metaphysics into an "architectonic" philosophy to Peirce's constant reworking of the parts. Peirce tried unsuccessfully to use the concept of continuity as the basis of a synthesis embracing science and religion and avoiding the pitfalls of nominalism. See esp. pp. 2-4; 99-102; 151-79; 406-7.

⁴⁰ Individual essays and titles are as follows: "The Fixation of Belief," XII (1877), 1-15; "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," XII (1878), 286-302; "The Doctrine of Chances," XII (1878), 604-15; "The Probability of Induction," XII (1878), 705-18; "The Order of Nature," XIII (1878), 203-17; "Deduction, Induction, and Hypothesis," XIII (1878), 470-82.

⁴¹ "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," XII (1878), 293.

⁴² "The Order of Nature," XIII (1878), 203-12.

ity in its totality.⁴³ Peirce also demanded autonomy for science, especially against those from theological quarters who would interfere with its pursuits. Like Du Bois-Reymond, he rejected teleological explanations; the universe, he said, "ought to be presumed too vast to have any character." Teleological theories, when put to the test of mechanical explanations, would fail as they had in the past, and physicists ought to be opposed to "every mystical theory." Peirce bluntly stated that those scientists who claimed there was no inherent conflict between science and theology were simply not as "clear-sighted as their opponents." There was no doubt that the scientific method would work a wide-sweeping revolution in thought, and the consequences would have to be faced. Peirce wrote:

Nor is it, by-the-way, a thing to be presumed that a man would have taken part in a movement having a possible atheistical issue without having taken serious and adequate counsel in regard to that responsibility. But, let the consequences of such a belief be as dire as they may, one thing is certain: that the state of the facts, whatever it may be, will surely get found out, and no human prudence can long arrest the triumphal car of truth—no, not if the discovery were such as to drive every individual of our race to suicide!⁴⁴

Peirce, Stallo and Du Bois-Reymond are the most sophisticated and well known of the writers in the *Popular Science Monthly* who subjected the epistemological assumptions of science to critical scrutiny. There were others, including one who advanced a view called "scientific nominalism," claiming that scientific concepts were merely "abstractions," not statements of fact about reality. Such a view of science should protect the scientist from the charge of materialism.⁴⁵ But despite the differences of opinion reflected in the magazine over what the method of science was and what scientists could assume about nature, there was a general prevailing theme, especially in editorial comment, that nature did follow uniform laws traceable throughout its phenomena by those trained in the proper method.

⁴³ "The Fixation of Belief," XII (1877), 11-14; "How To Make Our Ideas Clear," XII (1878), 298-99, 300; "The Doctrine of Chances," XII (1878), 609.

⁴⁴ "The Order of Nature," XIII (1878), 216. The Bishop of Carlisle, commenting on the debates of the Metaphysical Society, an English group which discussed issues similar to those found in the *Popular Science Monthly*, doubted that the idea of the uniformity of nature could be more than a working hypothesis for science. He certainly would not have the concept serve as a necessary assumption of religion. Rather God should be contemplated directly as the "original Cause of Nature," *PSM*, XXVIII (1885), 260; originally appearing in the *Nineteenth Century*. Alan Willard Brown, *The Metaphysical Society* (New York, 1947).

⁴⁵ Charles T. Haviland, "The Results of Abstraction in Science," *PSM*, XV (1879), 830-32. See also the letters to the editor in VI (1875), 499, and VII (1875), 229-30.

There might be differences of opinion about that method, but there was general agreement expressed in the pages of *Popular Science Monthly* that science alone possessed the true way and ought to have full autonomy to search out nature's laws and secrets. Even Du Bois-Reymond, doubtful as he was of the possibility of ultimate knowledge, viewed the history of natural science as the "*proper history of the human race.*" Lyricizing on the many practical benefits of science to man's comfort and health, he went on to say that the triumph of scientific method would appear in history as comparable in importance to the arrival of monotheism; despite the limits on man's knowledge, the "periphery of our planet threatens to become too narrow for man's genius." Scientific knowledge was cumulative, he said, and here even mediocrity, using the right method, could make a contribution.⁴⁶

Civilization was occasionally equated with science. Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the British Association, its president said: "To science we owe the idea of progress. . . . It is not, I think, now going too far to say that the true test of the civilization of a nation must be measured by its progress in science." There were obstacles in the way of scientific progress, including military ambition, state interference, socialism and anarchy, but science would eventually triumph.⁴⁷ Such praise of science was put in the clearest of superlatives by the editor, when he wrote that "it is no longer possible to deny that science as the latest is also the highest and most perfect product of the mind of man."⁴⁸ The superb achievements of science were also the theme of an address at the opening of the American Museum of Natural History in 1878, delivered by Harvard's scientifically oriented president, Charles W. Eliot. The scientific mind, he urged, was "searching, open," and "humble." Science inculcated accuracy and candor in its believers, who were "proud and happy" to take part in its triumphant march, which held the high promise of liberty for the individual, for the state and for religion.⁴⁹

Such hymns of praise for science and its votaries definitely constitute one aspect of the crusade to establish scientific autonomy and respectability. Its values had to be firmly insisted upon, and superlatives do not

⁴⁶ "Civilization and Science," *PSM*, XIII (1878), 388-91.

⁴⁷ Sir John Lubbock, "A Half-Century of Science," *PSM*, XX (1881), 219-20. See also W. Stanley Jevons, "Experimental Legislation," *PSM*, XVI (1880), 755, for the statement that "almost all the progress" for the past three centuries was attributable to the use of the planned experiment in the physical sciences.

⁴⁸ Editor's Table, "Mental Progress and Culture," *PSM*, XXVIII (1885), 122. See also the following: Editor's Table, "Charles Robert Darwin," XXI (1882), 266; unsigned, "Sketch of M. De Quatrefages," XXVI (1885), 698; Rev. E. Woodward Brown, "Liberty of Thought," XXI (1882), 70; Peter Bryce, "The Future of Mind," XXI (1882), 239-44.

⁴⁹ "Address," *PSM*, XII (1878), 473-75.

appear to have made the Victorians shy. Another important approach to the crusade involved the relations of science with religion, for science had not only to be freed from the interference of religion, but if possible reconciled with religion, the caretaker of values too important to be ignored. The basic way to reconciliation, often pointed out by students, was to interpret science as a new and superior revelation, giving a new vision of God's way of working through nature. To be acceptable, science must not, at the very least, damage the concept of deity, but how much better it would be if science enlarged the meaning of divinity! An original Divine Author of all things was the idea, ready at hand from the heritage of the Enlightenment, but this time the static element of Newtonian physico-mathematical laws was replaced by the dynamic workings of evolution, and the great lawmaker was immanent in a universe pregnant with lawful purpose. The evidence does not suggest that such metaphorical translations of ancient religious concepts into scientific phraseology were undertaken cynically; rather, it seems that Youmans, John Fiske, John W. Draper and others of like mind felt a genuine need to harmonize religious preconceptions with scientific naturalism.⁵⁰

Eliot's address, for example, ended with a rhapsodic peroration on evolution, the "continuity of creation" discovered by science, a development of the universe from "good to better," a progress with some setbacks, but on the whole a "firm foundation for man's instinctive faith in his own future." Essentially, such a vision was how science exalted the idea of God, "the greatest service which can be rendered to humanity." Eliot equated the utterance of science about nature with words attributed to Moses—"the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."⁵¹ Thus could science be sanctified by linking its most shocking idea with the utterance of a Hebrew prophet. Not only that, but progress was insured, for the laws of the past would govern the future. God was in His place, safely removed from interference in the laws He had once established—and for this heartening and sure view of the beneficent Creator, a refuge for all men, the "searching, open, humble mind . . . knowing that it cannot attain unto all truth," in short, the scientist, was responsible. It is almost as if Moses' idea of God were one

⁵⁰ John Fiske, "Agassiz and Darwinism," *PSM*, III (1873) 692-705; Lawrence Johnson, "The Chain of Species," V (1874), 460-70; Andrew Dickson White, "The Warfare of Science," VIII (1876), 554-56, 569-70; John W. Draper, "Evolution, Its Origin, Progress, and Consequences," XII (1877), 175-92; Joseph Le Conte, "Science and Mental Improvement," XIII (1878), 96-101. For an objection to Fiske's evolutionary theism, see W. D. Le Sueur, "Evolution and the Destiny of Man," XXVI (1885), 456-68. Le Sueur was a self-styled positivist.

⁵¹ "Address," *PSM*, XII (1878), 475.

of those brilliant guesses which later proved to be the hypothesis which explained the facts.

As in the case of the threat of materialistic science to the integrity of the mind, science could also be reconciled with religion by claiming that the concern of science was with the phenomenal world, beyond which was a deity, sometimes viewed as mystery,⁵² or occasionally even as the Christian God. The stalwart champion of Victorian orthodoxy, William E. Gladstone, found that evolution (his view being, for once, a bit unorthodox) confirmed God's design. But Gladstone could not see the scientists' objections to "sudden" acts of creation. Why limit the methods of the Creator?⁵³ Religion and science could also be separated as mutually exclusive human interests, an approach which assigned the realm of phenomenal nature to science but saved the transcendent mysteries beyond.⁵⁴ Man had different needs and different methods of attaining the truth which answered those needs; as Lord Rayleigh told the British Association: "The higher mysteries of being, if penetrable at all by human intellect, require other weapons than those of calculation and experiment."⁵⁵ A similar assertion was made by the Reverend Charles Force Deems at the inauguration ceremonies of Vanderbilt University in October 1875. Deems minimized the conflict between religion and science by assigning to science the realm of the finite and "things seen," while reserving for religion the infinite and "things not seen."⁵⁶

Henry Drummond, a British clergyman and popular orator prominent as a reconciler of science and religion, stated that the Bible, composed in the childhood of the race, should not be taken as science by either clergymen or scientists. The point was not how things were made, but that God made them. Drummond clearly exposed the issue, for with the scientists the only real question was *how* things were made, and they did not relish interference from the religionists, who were only concerned with the fact that God made them. But Drummond said that the interpreters of Genesis and the interpreters of nature could understand each other if both recognized that in Genesis could be found what all men

⁵² W. Stanley Jevons, "Evolution and the Doctrine of Design," *PSM*, V (1874), 98-100; William B. Carpenter, "The Force Behind Nature," XVI (1880), 614-25; S. Laing, "Modern Science and Modern Thought," XXVIII (1885), 18-24.

⁵³ "Proem to Genesis: A Reply to Professor Huxley," *PSM*, XXVIII (1886), 630-31. For a more orthodox evolutionary Christian, see James McCosh, "Is the Development Hypothesis Sufficient?" X (1876), 86-100.

⁵⁴ J. W. Dawson, "The So-Called 'Conflict of Science and Religion,'" *PSM*, X (1876), 72-74; unsigned, "Professor Rudolf Virchow," XXI (1882), 836-42.

⁵⁵ "The Recent Progress of Physical Science," *PSM*, XXV (1884), 758.

⁵⁶ "Science and Religion," *PSM*, VIII (1876), 449. Youmans would not accept Deems' minimizing of the conflict because religion *was* attacking science. Editor's Table, "The Conflict of Ages," VIII (1876), 493.

needed, a vision linking man and nature with their Maker. This was the "one high sense" in which Genesis was scientific.⁵⁷

Not precisely a part of the crusade to make science respectable, but certainly a part of the broadening of its domain, was the claim that religion could be studied scientifically because, as a part of the nature of man, it had a natural history.⁵⁸ Sometimes, religion was described as a natural striving of man toward perfection, as a universal emotional behavior pattern. It was Spencer's purpose, said Youmans, to save religion from the admittedly corrosive attacks of natural science by putting religion on the firm basis of nature itself.⁵⁹ In defending science against the accusation of atheism, an editorial stated that science would lead men to a more "spiritualized and abstract ideal of Divine nature. . . ."⁶⁰

By such arguments it could be said that true religion could not be in conflict with true science; the contentions of science were only with superstition, myth, dead dogma and ecclesiastical privilege.⁶¹ In one of his verbal duels with Gladstone, Huxley found the conflict between science and religion "purely factitious," a fabrication of "short-sighted" religionists who mistook theology for religion and "equally short-sighted" scientists who tried to extend the bounds of science beyond the area of that which was intellectually clear. But Huxley found the heart of religion in the words of the Hebrew prophets who said, "'And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?'" No expansion of scientific knowledge or acuteness of criticism could prove justice worthless or mercy hateful.

He hoped that "true Science" would always perform the useful task of relieving men "from the burden of false science" imposed on them for supposedly religious reasons.⁶² The position taken by Huxley was taken by others—science would purify religion of false accretions and debased concepts of God, and fanaticism would be washed clean in the pure light

⁵⁷ "Comments by Professor Henry Drummond," *PSM*, XXVIII (1886), 811.

⁵⁸ A. De Quatrefages, "Natural History of Man," V (1874), 513-32; James T. Bixby, "Influence of the Environment on Religion," XXIV (1883), 6-24; Count Goblet D'Alviella, "The Scientific Study of Religions," XXVIII (1885), 145-60; Herbert Spencer, "Idol-Worship and Fetich-Worship," VIII (1875), 158-64.

⁵⁹ Editor's Table, "Harrison and Spencer on Religion," XXVI (1885), 407-9. Peirce, for example, recognized the validity in all religious emotion in man's striving toward perfection. "The Order of Nature," XIII (1878), 216-17.

⁶⁰ Editor's Table, "The Accusation of Atheism," XI (1877), 369.

⁶¹ Editor's Table, "The Religious Recognition of Nature," *PSM*, XIV (1879), 392-95; Josiah P. Cooke Jr., "The Nobility of Knowledge," V (1874), 621-22; unsigned, "Sketch of Professor Joseph Le Conte," XII (1878), 358-61; Warring Wilkinson, "Is Conscience Primitive?" XIV (1879), 647-53; Thomas Sergeant Perry, "Science and Conscience," XXIII (1883), 13-20.

⁶² "The Interpreters of Genesis and the Interpreters of Nature," *PSM*, XXVIII (1886), 459-60.

of scientific truth.⁶³ When James McCosh of Princeton, who made his own version of reconciliation between evolution and religion, admitted that natural facts did not militate against the concept of an "Infinite Mind" behind nature, the *Popular Science Monthly* exulted that religion was coming to understand that "Science is a helping friend of true religion."⁶⁴

But religion had to be shown that it had no business interfering with the proper domain of science—the interpretation of nature, and clergymen had to be told not to voice opinions on questions of scientific fact.⁶⁵ The demand for scientific autonomy appears in almost any article on evolution or on Herbert Spencer. In an article on Spencer, Youmans noted the theological opprobrium which still attached to geological theories which had upset Biblical notions of time, but the "old error" was "completely exploded."⁶⁶ John W. Draper demanded a thoroughly naturalistic view of evolution, but watered down his message with the note that all nature's laws were attributable to the immutable fiat of God.⁶⁷ No subject whatever, said a Positivist who sometimes contributed to the *Popular Science Monthly*, was out of bounds to science, the concern of which was not with the "higher emotions." Science was not to be prevented by the "tom-toms" of the pulpit from reducing "all facts . . . to order and harmony." Science was completely independent and would not surrender "one atom of determinate fact" or any of its conclusions to those who wanted the facts to support religion.⁶⁸

The claim that science should have autonomy because of superior ways of attaining truth about nature was also asserted against the classical and literary tradition so firmly entrenched in Western educational theory and practice. In a reply to Matthew Arnold's arguments in favor of the classical education, editor Youmans stated that literature "never cared for truth." Because of this failure, science "arose to repair the omission; and science has only advanced as feeling for truth has been developed and

⁶³ "The religion of the ancients exalted vice as well as Nature. Our present religion suppresses Nature as well as vice. The religion of the future will teach us to distinguish between vice and Nature." Felix Oswald, "Physical Education," *PSM*, XX (1881), 165. See also Andrew D. White, "New Chapters in the Warfare of Science," XXVII (1885), 735.

⁶⁴ Editor's Table, "The Progress of Theology," V (1874), 114.

⁶⁵ George Henry Lewes, "On the Dread and Dislike of Science," *PSM*, XIII (1878), 410-20; George G. Romanes, "A Reply to 'Fallacies of Evolution,'" XVI (1879), 113-14; Editor's Table, X (1876), 106-8; P. H. Pye-Smith, "The Study of Physiology," XVI (1879), 54.

⁶⁶ "Spencer . . . Evolution," VI (1874), 23.

⁶⁷ "Evolution," *PSM*, XIII (1877), 190-91.

⁶⁸ W. D. Le Sueur, "Evolution Bounded by Theology," XXIX (1886), 149-51. See also, Le Sueur, "A Defense of Modern Thought," XXIV (1883), 780-93.

deepened. . . ." ⁶⁹ As with religion, a compromise could be reached with literature, for, as John Tyndall said, literature and science met different but "equally permanent needs of human nature." If nature included both literature and science, men should exhibit "as large a toleration." There was no necessary conflict between the two.⁷⁰

The major ethical value claimed for the scientist by writers in the *Popular Science Monthly* was his absolute fidelity to the truth of natural fact. Moralists have stressed truth as an ideal since Socrates, at least, and there was nothing new in the nineteenth-century scientist's insistence on his devotion to truth except, perhaps, the obvious fact that he was attempting to justify and magnify his enterprise in public esteem. The scientist's loud and frequent announcement of his intentions to follow truth wherever it led suggests that his truth must have threatened other truths, or metaphysics. It was the claim that, more than any other human endeavor, science was guided by the value of the truth, which constituted the basic rationale for the scientist's crusade for autonomy and respectability.

In one of Huxley's polemics for evolution, a speech given in New York on his American tour in 1876, reprinted in the *Popular Science Monthly*, that most fervent of all the crusaders for naturalism told his listeners that a belief not based on evidence was not only illogical, but immoral.⁷¹ When Henry George urged the introduction of the dispassionate spirit of science into political issues, the *Popular Science Monthly* approved, stating that science was the only school for "discipline in truthfulness."⁷²

Not all scientists need be brilliant, said a professor whose lecture was reprinted in Youmans' magazine, but all must be scrupulously devoted to truth.⁷³ John Tyndall recalled that when he became interested in science as a career, he saw "that, to carry it duly and honestly out, moral qualities were incessantly invoked. There was no room allowed for insincerity,—no room even for carelessness."⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Editor's Table, "Matthew Arnold on Literature and Science," XXI (1882), 845; in reply to Arnold, "Literature and Science," XXI (1882), 737-51. Other relevant items include these: William Bracket, "Modern Science in its Relation to Literature," XV (1879), 166-78; M. M. Guyau, "Are Science and Art Antagonistic?" XXV (1884), 357-65; Herbert Spencer, "Criticisms Corrected," XVII (1880), 795-801.

⁷⁰ "Goethe's Farbenlehre.—(Theory of Colors)," PSM, XVII (1880), 321.

⁷¹ "The Three Hypotheses of the History of Nature," X (1876), 52. See also, from the same lecture series, X, 298. Huxley's chief personal value was the pursuit of truth, which he often discussed in religious metaphor. Bibby, Huxley, pp. 45-46, 77.

⁷² Editor's Table, "Politics Against Political Science," XVII (1880), 557. For George's article, see XVII, 433-53.

⁷³ H. Newell Martin, "The Study and Teaching of Biology," X (1876), 298-309, esp. 299.

⁷⁴ "Virchow and Evolution," PSM, XIV (1879), 272. An article extracted by the PSM from Tyndall's *Fragments of Science*.

John Wesley Powell, the great geologist who surveyed the Colorado River valley, argued that science should have a greater place in education because scientific training inculcated "mental integrity." Whereas in the past men had imagined how they wanted nature to be and then tried to prove their dreams true, the modern scientific imagination, unlike the metaphysical, allowed itself to be disciplined by "unrelenting facts." Science knew no sacred truths, no dogma which could not be questioned, said Powell.⁷⁵ The *Popular Science Monthly* carried the remarks of Sir Leslie Stephen, rationalist, essayist and editor, commenting upon a debate in University College, London, on whether or not scientific thought had proven to be "an injurious influence on English society." Frankly admitting the corrosive effects of science on established traditions, religion and morality, Stephen found only one cure for the scientific corruption of such old values and that was more science. Society could not regress; it had to apply the test of truth to all its beliefs. As with all progress, such a test would cause pain, but the alternative was "to go on believing what you know to be lies. . . ." Science was that body of truth which was "definitely established" so that "no reasonable person" doubted it, said Stephen. To say that science was mischievous was therefore to say that truth was mischievous, "an assertion to which no one would be likely to agree. . . ." ⁷⁶

Perhaps the most famous demand for scientific autonomy to appear in the *Popular Science Monthly* was John Tyndall's presidential address before the British Association in 1874. Tyndall solemnly marked off the boundaries of science and religion, each of which satisfied a part of the many-sided nature of man—science the intellectual thirst for an explanation of nature, religion the emotional need for a sense of some power behind the changing phenomena of nature. Tyndall described the position of science as so impregnable that "all religious theories, schemes, and systems, which embrace notions of cosmogony, or which otherwise reach into its domain must, in so far as they do this, submit to the control of science, and relinquish all thought of controlling it. . . ." ⁷⁷

⁷⁵ "The Larger Import of Scientific Education," *PSM*, XXVI (1885), 455; an address at the opening of the Corcoran School of Science and Arts, in Washington, D. C., October 1, 1884. The *PSM* frequently published such addresses. Parts of Powell's famous book on the Colorado were published serially in the *PSM*, VIII (1875), 385-99; 531-42; 670-80.

⁷⁶ "Remarks on the Influence of Science," XXIV (1883), 82-85. Originally carried with punctuation to indicate quotation, which has been removed to simplify punctuation in this article. Other claims for the supremacy of science in its pursuit of truth are: Editor's Table, "The Liberty of Science and Education," XIII (1878), 110; Editor's Table, "Copyright and Morality," XIV (1879), 531; Elias Schneider, "The Tides," XII (1877), 232; James Burns to the editor (Dec. 7, 1878), XIV (1879), 529.

⁷⁷ "Inaugural Address Before the British Association," V (1874), 684.

Religion could either yield to this assertion, said Tyndall, or suffer the fate of "an organism too rigid to adjust itself to its environment. . . ." But religion would eventually yield; for one reason, because religion, like science, was a part of man's emotional nature. Religion and science overlapped, and the scientist pursued truth with a fervor akin to "moral force." Science was not so far apart from literature, either, and would combine with any effort "toward the bettering of man's estate." In uttering these warm phrases of union, Tyndall warned his audience not to try to blink away, like Hamlet, any of the great questions science was raising. The great lesson to be learned was not whether any one scientific theory was right or wrong, but the value of the "unrestricted right of search." Men would continue to seek answers beyond the reach of scientific method, such as "the mystery from which" they emerged, but they should remember that such answers could never be fixed, that religion changed shape with the times.

Throughout this Belfast Address, Tyndall's theme was the sufficiency of the naturalistic point of view in contrast to the inadequacy of supernatural or teleological philosophies. The order in nature was discoverable by science, which Tyndall defined as a process of abstraction of "physical theories which lie beyond the pale of experience, but which satisfy the desire of the mind to see every natural occurrence resting upon a cause. . . ." In speculating on that cause, Tyndall came close to mechanistic determinism, suggesting that the law of the conservation of energy was the unifying law of all nature. He somewhat self-consciously allowed himself the bold speculation that "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life" was discernible in gross matter. But this was going "across the boundary of the experimental evidence. . . ." Tyndall also paid his respects to the reigning scientific theory of the day by asserting that the idea of evolution held that man "in his totality" was the product of an interaction between the organism and the environment. That totality included not only the mind but aesthetic appreciation, not only physical love but moral, not only the emotions of awe, wonder and reverence, but also "that deep-set feeling which, since the earliest dawn of history . . . incorporated itself into the religions of the world. . . ." ⁷⁸

The champions of naturalism could hardly go further than Tyndall, who granted religion its place in man's nature, then derived that nature from the interaction of matter and natural laws. It is small wonder that the Belfast Address was a sensation in its day, the target of theological attacks on its "materialism" that rank with those on Huxley's "Physical

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 652-86.

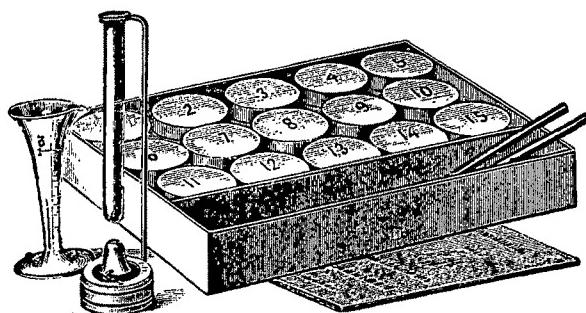
Basis of Life" address and Darwin's *Descent of Man*.⁷⁹ That Tyndall himself felt some discomfort from the charges of "materialist" hurled at his head is evidenced by a remark in the Introduction to his *Fragments of Science*. Here he stated clearly his idea that the connection between matter and mind was unsolvable by scientific method, which took note only of the correlation between the two. He was even willing, he said, to accept the idea of the soul as a poetic view of a phenomenon which refused "the yoke of ordinary physical laws. . . ." Those with theological prejudices who attacked him for such a view were "guilty of black ingratitude."⁸⁰

The *Popular Science Monthly* brought forth all its heavy weapons to repel attacks against the right of a scientist such as Tyndall to make such forthright demands for the autonomy of science to study nature on its own terms; to claim for science the respect due a professional discipline with its own powerful weapons designed to reveal truth about nature.⁸¹ In its crusading fervor, Youmans' periodical played a significant role in the long and complex history of the impact of naturalism on Western thought.

⁷⁹ John Trowbridge, "Science from the Pulpit," *PSM*, VI (1875), 734-39. D. C. Somervell, *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1940), pp. 134-35; Alan Willard Brown, *The Metaphysical Society*, pp. 232-37.

⁸⁰ "Virchow and Evolution," *PSM*, XIV (1879), 285. Some of the quoted passages were in an imaginary dialogue which Tyndall used to illustrate his position. Punctuation has been simplified. There is evidence that Huxley also felt charges of infidelity to be offensive. "Agnosticism," in *Science and Christian Tradition* (London, 1897), 211-12.

⁸¹ Editor's Table, VI (1874-75), 500-4. Tyndall's reply to his critics appeared in the *PSM*, VI (1875), 422-40.



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Ezra Pound: The Use and Abuse of History

THE LONGEST, MOST COMPLEX AND MOST AMBITIOUS POEM OF OUR TIME, *The Cantos* of Ezra Pound, now some forty years in the making and not yet complete, has for its materials not the "growth of a poet's mind," like Wordsworth's *Prelude*, nor an old murder mystery, like Browning's *Ring and the Book*, nor the fall of man and God's ways to man, nor the loss of a friend, but the sweep of human history from ancient times to the twentieth century, including both western and eastern history. To be sure, not *all* periods and civilizations are admitted into *The Cantos*, but enough of them are to give the impression that *The Cantos* are indeed something of a compendium of man's attempts to achieve civilization. The problem to which I shall address myself in this paper is Pound's treatment of history, for not all critics of Pound's poetry are agreed that he has successfully subdued the complex and refractory materials of history and turned them into poetry. Robert Gorham Davis, for instance, says that Pound merely "tinkers" with history, distorts it and oversimplifies it so much that inevitably "most of history becomes irrelevant."¹ F. R. Leavis finds *The Cantos*, despite their originality of versification, barren and monotonous, not unrelated to the fact that Pound as man and artist has suffered "a long degeneration," evident when Pound became Mussolini's champion.² A critic and poet like Richard Eberhart attempts to abstract the poetic gold from the historical and political dross in *The Cantos*, for, he says, the historical and political will in a few short years be irrelevant to the meaning of *The Cantos*.³ He is one who believes that *The Cantos* are good poetry but poor history.

But loyal Poundians see no necessity to make a disjunction between Pound's poetry and his history, for both in their view are sound and

¹ Robert Gorham Davis, "Pound, Jeffers, and Others," *Partisan Review*, XV (1948), 1219-25.

² F. R. Leavis, "Pound in His Letters," *Scrutiny*, XVIII (1951), 74-77.

³ Richard Eberhart, "Pound's New Cantos," *Quarterly Review of Literature*, V (1949), 174-91.

excellent. Thus Davenport claims that "the poem . . . speaks history and theory along with its other functions. Its multiplicity of subjects and directions are controlled by a singleness of purpose which is a condensation of doctrine as rich in fused sensibilities as the structure of the poem itself."⁴ Professor Hugh Kenner, most eminent of the Poundians, perceives a unity of purpose from the first to the latest cantos, and claims that the later cantos elucidate the earlier, that the poem as a whole aims for truth by honestly presenting a "revelation of events."⁵ In short, those who admire *The Cantos* desire greatly to read the poem as a unified composition in which all parts, from the earliest to the latest, cohere and reinforce one another; they accept with little or no reservation the validity of Pound's treatment and interpretation of history; they cannot, like Eberhart, abstract the poetry from the history, nor do they have a desire to do so.

But there are readers who admire greatly some of the cantos and find others something less than admirable. I myself find the first forty-one cantos the most satisfying and those following much less so, mainly because I seldom find myself arguing with the poet's treatment of history in the earlier cantos, but from canto XLII and on I find my aesthetic responses inhibited by what seems to me a frequently arbitrary and completely irresponsible treatment of history. Others, like Mr. Fraser, hold similar opinion.⁶ I believe that there is a decorous modesty and humility in Pound's attitude toward history in the first forty-one cantos; thereafter the master becomes arrogant and doctrinaire and does not hesitate to mangle the facts of history if such will serve his ends. In the remaining parts of this paper, I should like to demonstrate that the changed approach to history is real, and then to suggest reasons for the change.

The modest approach to history is evident in Pound's early criticism of both social and literary, and is, moreover, reflected in the early cantos written during the 1920s. He theorized a good deal about the relationship between society and the arts, and he speculated on aesthetics and history.

It may come as something of a surprise to those who associate Pound with Mussolini and broadcasts for Fascist Italy during World War II that Pound in his younger days, the first years of his residence in England, was very much the American patriot. In his *Pro Patria Mia* (written

⁴ Guy Davenport, "Pound and Frobenius," one of the English Institute Papers (1954), collected in *Motive and Method in the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, ed. Lewis Leary (New York, 1954), p. 35.

⁵ Hugh Kenner, "The Broken Mirrors and the Mirror of Memory," *Motive and Method*, p. 29.

⁶ G. S. Fraser, *Ezra Pound* (Edinburgh and London, 1960), pp. 76-77, 97.

- 1913 but not published in London until 1962) he had much to say about the American character, America's tradition, the American renaissance, the uses of American millionaires, and most of what he said was benignly optimistic. Contrasting England and America, he found England "medieval" in the worst sense, for everything was dependent upon property and succession: "To return to America," he said, "is like going through some very invigorating, very cleansing sort of bath" (p. 38). The American "keynote" was found in Whitman, and included such qualities as generosity, looseness and magnanimity (p. 45). Whistler had proved that American birth did not preclude eminence in the arts, and he, with Lincoln, was at "the beginning of our Great Tradition" (p. 35). He believed that America had a great future (p. 44) and needed only "enthusiasm and propaganda" to give birth to a renaissance comparable to the Italian (pp. 53-55). Enthusiasm the Americans had, for millionaires had endowed many libraries and universities (p. 58); at this stage in his career, Pound did not believe that usury and art were incompatible: citing the Medici, a "hackneyed example," he said, as examples for modern millionaires, he proclaimed that the Medici were now honored for their patronage of the arts, not for "their very able corruption of the city of Florence" (p. 50).

As for the relation between politics, philosophy and art, Pound believed that almost every work of art implied a political, social or philosophical statement, but the force of the artistic presentation was dependent upon technique; one could, for instance, argue about the relationship between Christianity and Socialism, "but with Sabatte's painting, '*Mort du premier Socialiste*', you cannot argue" (p. 57). In other words, artistic considerations, as they should be, were of more importance to the young Pound than an explicit political, social or philosophical statement, which is reminiscent of Sydney's "for the Poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lyeth. . ." Likewise, Pound's attitude toward history was disinterested; from a study of the past, he observed that the human situation could be improved, though he was no believer in utopias; one went to history not to find panaceas for the present, not to discover the causes of present corruption (as Pound was later to do), but to find the enduring, to distinguish the transient from the lasting, to see what has worked and what has not.

In such a way, then, did the young Pound theorize about art, society and the uses of history in 1913; that his attitude toward history was largely disinterested and that he was mainly concerned with the enduring values and monuments of civilization as subjects for poetry with which "you cannot argue" is evident, I believe, in the first forty-one cantos of

the Cantos, the earliest of which were begun about 1919 and all of which were published by 1934. I do not say that the earliest cantos are entirely free of certain aesthetically impure impulses, but I do say that Pound's first interest was to write good poetry, and I believe he largely succeeded in doing so; drawing upon the materials of history, he employed a novel method that afforded the reader of these cantos, among other things, variety of matter, surprise and a new insight into the bases of our civilization.

As Hugh Kenner has observed, Pound "wants his poem about history to be historically true—that is, an image of how things really happen,"⁷ which is, I think, a good description of Pound's intent in the first forty-nine cantos. His method of proceeding, as described by Sister Mary Bernetta Quinn, involves a descent to the shades, metamorphosis and parallelism; the three planes of values sought and treated are "the permanent, the recurrent, the casual."⁸ Some see the poem as a modern odyssey in which "the narrator of the poem follows the trail of Homer's wanderer, eking the way home."⁹ I believe, however, that Tennyson's Ulysses is more the exemplar in Pound's poem than Homer's Odysseus, for, in his excursion through history in search of the good, Pound could well say both for the chief virtues that he celebrates and for himself,

. . . my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Another poem relevant to the values sought in *The Cantos* is Pound's early translation of the Old English *Seafarer*, more of which later.

In his search, then, for the true values of civilization as subjects for poetry, he found that some values and virtues do endure and will manifest themselves in parallel ways from age to age; that some come into

⁷ "Broken Mirrors," p. 13.

⁸ Sister M. Bernetta Quinn O.S.F., "The Metamorphoses of Ezra Pound," *Motive and Method*, p. 62.

⁹ Forrest Read Jr., "A Man of No Fortune," *Motive and Method*, p. 101.

being, fade away and emerge at a later period, perhaps in a different guise, which is metamorphosis; other values are casual, not intrinsic to civilization, but peculiar to a certain period. We ought also to keep in mind that while the permanent is usually the good, the recurrent and the casual are not always so.

Although Pound's view of history is selective (he does not have much to do with periods like the Elizabethan, etc.), a survey of the subject matter of the first forty-one cantos shows us "God's plenty." Pound has the imaginative variety of the true epic poet, and reminds us in some ways of Spenser as we progress from one action to another, all different and all related—though the relations are not always easy to perceive. Thus the first forty-one cantos take us from ancient Greece to the first three decades of the twentieth century: with Odysseus we descend to Hades; with the Greek sailor Acoëtes we behold the metamorphosis of a ship and its sailors by the god Dionysus; we are then in medieval Venice and the Spain of El Cid; then we are treated to incidents of violation and cannibalism, mythological and historical, in the tales of Itys, Actaeon and Cabestan; then with Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of the kings of France and England; then to a scene of decadence and boredom in the twentieth century; we then hear the voice of Sigismund Malatesta, Renaissance condottiere, tyrant and patron of the arts; we have scenes from modern commerce, Confucian China, the Dantean inferno of World War I, Medicean Florence, Jeffersonian America, modern industry and scientific exploration, the planning and building of St. Mark's in Venice; we have Guido Cavalcanti on love, Van Buren on the national bank, and disaster in Circe's ingle; we have modern finance, Mussolini and the voyages of Hanno. After the first forty-one cantos, variety is lessened: cantos XLII to LI, where banking and usury themes emerge to assume primary importance, are comparatively restricted in scope; cantos LIII-LXI give the sweep of Chinese history; cantos LXII-LXXI are about John Adams and the American Revolution; and cantos LXXIV-LXXXIV are the Pisan Cantos, written while Pound was in detention outside of Pisa.

We have then, "God's plenty," but I think I can better illustrate the interesting and surprising juxtapositions we have from canto to canto (true also within the canto) by considering briefly cantos XXII, XXIII and XXIV.¹⁰ Canto XXII is about false values that are all too permanent,

¹⁰ The discussion of *The Cantos* that follows is based upon the New Directions edition, New York, 1948; all quotations are from this edition. My discussion would have been brief indeed if a work like J. H. Edwards and W. W. Vasse, *Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound, Cantos I-LXXXIV* (Berkeley, Calif., 1959), had not been available.

the worship of money, the metamorphosis of greed into a virtue. This is a canto about the laying of railroads to the American West; we see the rapacity of industrialists denuding forests; we see the tremendous waste in producing for war contracts; we have a dialogue on economics between C. H. Douglas and John Maynard Keynes; we have commercial greed and rapacity at its lowest level in the meeting between Meester Freer and Mohammed Ben Abt el Hjameed; and then we go to the synagogue at Gibralter where we have a comical rabbi sniffing snuff, and last to a judge trying to legislate decorous clothing for women (no overt anti-Semitism, even though the synagogue scene follows what it does). Canto XXIII, however, is about the heroic virtues, a contrast as we move to search, discovery, heroic effort and communion with the gods, a canto implying, I think, that man is at his most godlike when he has a strong will "to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield." We have, then, the Italian humanists bringing home manuscripts from Greece, with what consequences for modern civilization we all know; then we have Pierre Curie in his laboratory, searching and discovering, with consequences for modern science we all know; we have the tenth labor of Hercules, his search for the cattle of Geryon; we again return to Odysseus; we have Pierre de Maensac and his determination to become a troubadour; we have dialogue between Anchises and Aphrodite at the time that Aeneas was conceived, himself a figure of heroic virtue who strove, who sought, who found and would not yield.

Through the devices of contrast and parallelism, the ignoble and the heroic thus emerge as subjects for cantos XXII and XXIII, but canto XXIV treats only one subject and theme, the heroic and tragic dramatized from an episode in the life of Niccolo d'Este, who ruled Ferrara during its golden age, the early fifteenth century. He was a patron of humanists like Guarino da Verona, and the University of Ferrara, which Niccolo reopened, became one of the five great centers of learning in Renaissance Italy. But in canto XXIV we have the tragedy of Niccolo's life, something we do not ordinarily find in the history texts. It is about the adulterous love between Parisina, Niccolo's wife, and Aldovrandino, Niccolo's bastard son. I cannot do here a complete analysis of the canto, but I can say that Byron's poem on Parisina is juvenile in comparison. Pound has gone back to actual letters, from which he gives us key excerpts as he suggests the progress of the tragic love. We have Parisina in her happy days, very enthusiastic about horse racing and books; we have the arrangement of a dowry for Parisina's daughter, Margaret; we have Niccolo's romantic trip with Parisina to the Holy Land, both enjoying the many marvelous sights and sounds they encounter; but then we come

to Niccolo's order for the beheading of Aldovrandino, the confrontation between Parisina and Niccolo, Parisina's reaction, Niccolo's great sorrow, and Niccolo's beheading of her in 1425 and of other adulterous women "that his should not suffer alone." But six years later Niccolo marries again; a year after his second marriage we have a meeting between Niccolo and the Marquis of Salazzo, Niccolo's father-in-law, who has come to see his new grandson, Hercules (Ercole I, 1431-1505). Certainly old memories of his happier days with Parisina would be revived in Niccolo with the birth of a son, for Niccolo had loved Parisina dearly. But through everything, Niccolo did what he thought he had to do, and bore his sorrow heroically, and he, not Parisina or Aldovrandino, is the one who suffered most. The canto ends with the death of and memorial for Niccolo. My summary of the canto is woefully inadequate to express its power, but with this treatment of history, I say, one cannot argue, any more than one can argue with Sabatte's *Mort du Premier Socialiste*.

From the first forty-one cantos, then, emerges a view of history, of civilization, that is truly epic in scope. We find exemplars of the heroic virtues, those who strive, seek, find and will not yield, in all ages; we find exemplars of the contemptible—the rapacious, the cruel, the greedy, the cowardly; characters meet and merge in parallel situations and in metamorphosis; we have tragedy and comedy, the solemn, the ludicrous, the farcical. And yet, amidst the seeming chaos of events, there inheres a principle of moral order in the universe, an order that is not with impunity violated. From the air Pound has gathered live traditions, has sought the permanent and enduring; but above all, from the diverse materials of history, from intimate letters, journals and diaries, from mythology and state papers he has created a poem that future generations will not willingly let die.

But Pound's attitude toward history underwent a change. The events of his own time, the early 1930s, assumed an overwhelming importance for him; his meditations upon the sequence of World War I and the Great Depression led him to believe that twentieth-century civilization was not merely an old bitch with bad teeth, but an old bitch in her death throes. He was deeply moved by the spectacle of able men unemployed and hungry; he was angered by the neglect of the arts—and he may have been somewhat piqued by the failure of the world to accord him some recognition. It became his purpose in the 1930s (continued in the 1940s) to save western civilization and, above all, to establish social justice.

The changed attitude toward history of which I speak was subtle, and I doubt very much that Pound was conscious of his crossing the line that divides the disinterested view of history from the interested. At any rate,

it is evident from a number of his essays written in the 1930s and 1940s that he came to look upon history not as the record of the permanent, the recurrent and the casual from which one could draw material for poetry, but as a case record of a sick civilization (the sickest of all being twentieth-century American) from which he would prescribe for present corruption. "We physicians of the mind," he wrote in 1938, "can not rest until we have discovered a serum which will make impossible the existence on the American scene of the persons who have impeded this study, wilfully or in abuleia."¹¹ England was likewise sick: although Chaucer and Shakespeare had never felt it necessary to leave the country, some Romantic and Victorian poets did; he concluded that "something had happened in and to England. An historian, if he were real, would want to pry into it."¹² The didactic uses of history became paramount; it was now necessary "to understand the nature of error";¹³ in short, the sordidness, squalor and meanness of the present led Pound to believe that there was little if any virtue in the twentieth century, and that western civilization had suffered a fall from a past of innocence, purity and integrity. Somewhere in the past had been a guileful serpent who had seduced man from ways of righteousness and justice. Somewhere, something had gone wrong, and it became Pound's duty to identify the serpent, or isolate the virus.

The result of all this was a drastic oversimplification of history, especially of American history. The American present was swamped by a "total democracy bilge," "current cant about 'the people,'" a sad perversion of Jefferson's ideas on democracy.¹⁴ The past, among other things, was the era of clipper ships, when, "even if economic, the history of the United States was, up to the year 1860, romantic."¹⁵ The great heroes of American culture were Jefferson and Adams. An indigenous, valid American culture existed from 1770 to 1861; after that, greed and commercialism, and those who wanted to preserve American cultural values were forced to emigrate.¹⁶ Sometimes he narrowed the period of true American civilization from 1760 to 1830, with attenuation from 1830 to 1860, and bankruptcy from 1870 to the 1930s.¹⁷ In the first period, Americans had been a "handful of people who lived on little and did not run

¹¹ From Pound's essay on "National Culture" (1938) in *Impact: Essays on Ignorance and the Decline of American Civilization* (Chicago, 1960), p. 5. The essays referred to in the following footnotes may have the short titles, and are to be found in *Impact*.

¹² "Jefferson-Adams Letters" (1937), pp. 182-83.

¹³ "Economic Nature of the United States" (1944), p. 15.

¹⁴ "National Culture," p. 9.

¹⁵ "Economic Nature," p. 28.

¹⁶ "National Culture," p. 3.

¹⁷ "Jefferson-Adams Letters," pp. 166-67.

into debt [and] brought to, and preserved in America, a rather high, severe culture. . . ." ¹⁸ Any return to high civilization would involve the incorporation of the "civic order" that existed during the time of Jackson and Van Buren.¹⁹ In those days, the leaders of American civilization had highly developed social instincts, but in the twentieth century ("our gormy and squalid days") the leaders were antisocial.²⁰ The American frontier had challenged Americans to heroic deeds of virtue, and had produced a Lincoln, the last of the frontier presidents.²¹ As for Europe, from ancient Sparta to Pope Leo X there had existed an order of scaled values, "*a sense of gradations*," a "cosmos," an "order," a unity that had become extinct.²² Scholastic theologians who exalted reason at the expense of faith may have been responsible for the "slithering process" that led to the end of religion.²³ But, with admirable inconsistency, Pound had great respect for those who had done the most to bring about the end of the old order, the deists and Encyclopedists, who were "brilliant." Indeed, "the sanity and civilization of Adams-Jefferson stems from the Encyclopedists."²⁴ One ray of light there was in the present, Mussolini, "the first head of state in our time to perceive and to proclaim *quality* as a dimension in national production."²⁵

Pound the analyst of present corruption soon discovered that economics is the key to history. We may indeed wonder about the flood of economic tracts and books that poured from the study of a mere literary man in the 1930s and 1940s, but Pound asserted that he was merely re-establishing a sound literary tradition linked with the study of money, a tradition that had able exponents in Demosthenes and Dante.²⁶ By his own admission, he had had little or no interest in economics in 1912, but the "crimes against the living art" committed by money interests had forced him to the study in the early 1930s.²⁷ Happily, the study was not as complex as many might think:

Economics are like Euclid or like physics in that if you don't understand a few simple principles you will fall into error after error, but if you have a few very simple perceptions you can construct soundly without any very great learning.²⁸

In 1942, he proclaimed in his by now magisterial fashion that "without history one is lost in the dark," and that modern history is largely

¹⁸ "Economic Nature," pp. 26-27.

²⁴ "Jefferson-Adams Letters," p. 177.

¹⁹ "National Culture," p. 9.

²⁵ "Murder by Capital" (1933), p. 87.

²⁰ "Jefferson-Adams Letters," p. 173.

²⁶ "Visiting Card," p. 48.

²¹ "Economic Nature," p. 27.

²⁷ "Murder by Capital," p. 88.

²² "Jefferson-Adams Letters," pp. 170-71.

²⁸ "An Impact" (1935), p. 154.

²³ "Visiting Card" (1942), p. 60.

meaningless unless one goes back to "the Sienese bank, the Monte dei Paschi."²⁹ What, for Pound, were "eight of the most significant lines ever written"? Not the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes or the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence, but Jefferson's theory of interest and the circulation of money.³⁰

In Spenser's *Faery Queene* we are treated in the fourth canto of the first book to a pageant of the seven deadly sins. The figure of Avarice, riding upon a camel, has two iron pots full of gold, a heap of gold in his lap and "Accursed usurie was all his trade." But, for Pound of the 1930s and 1940s, the seven deadly sins had been reduced to one, which is usury. If history was the key to enlightenment, if economics was the key to history, if economics was simple and based upon a few easily learned principles, so the key to economics, history and the fall of man, is usury. The motto for *Impact* is "Bellum cano perrenne, between usura and the man who wants to do a good job." It is usury, then, that has ruined art, America and the West.

According to Davenport, it was from his studies in Frobenius that Pound learned to see "the corrosion of usury in architectural or painting style. . ."³¹ Whatever may have been his source for this insight, it is certain enough that he believed by 1937 that art is directly affected by the amount of tolerance given to usury. Works of art, by a sort of carbon method, can thus be dated, for they become "blobby and messy" as usury progresses.³² He lamented that Salmasius' *De Modo Usurarum* had not been reprinted since 1639 or 1640, and that Anglo-Saxons had not remembered the emphasis given by Shakespeare, Bacon, Hume and Berkeley to economics:

After the arch-heretic Calvin, it seems, discussion of usury has gone out of fashion. A pity! As long as the Mother Church concerned herself with this matter one continued to build cathedrals. Religious art flourished.³³

As art had been ruined by usury, so had America. In the colonial period, that golden age before men turned their minds to usury, silversmithing, furniture making and architecture flourished as domestic arts; German glassmakers had their annual Bach festivals, and Jefferson's "Monticello" showed much refinement of taste.³⁴ But the "democratic system was betrayed" after 1860 from its Adamic days of pristine excel-

²⁹ "Visiting Card," p. 46.

³⁰ "Jefferson-Adams Letters," p. 174.

³¹ "Pound and Frobenius," *Motive and Method*, p. 41.

³² "Confucius" (1937), p. 198.

³³ "Visiting Card," p. 61.

³⁴ "Economic Nature," p. 26.

lence;³⁵ one sees in the correspondence of Adams and Jefferson and in the writings of Van Buren and other fathers the true economic history of the United States, but what they fought against came to pass after the War of Secession: huge debts, manipulation of the currency, usury, monopolies and corners.³⁶ Indeed, the South was warred on by northern usurers who had discovered that owning slaves was less profitable than paying laborers a subsistence wage. The defeat of the South was "pre-determined."³⁷ In the same essay, Pound hinted darkly that Lincoln's assassination was really the work of usurers (p. 190). So democracy perished, and an "evil combine" took over the power of the government after Lincoln's death (p. 195); since then, the economic history of the United States has indeed been the story of speculation, corners, monopolies and all the rest, such activities being centered in New York and Chicago.³⁸ As for the fate of the West, Pound was quite sure in 1944 that the ultimate cause of World War II was the founding of the Bank of England in 1694.³⁹ He did not tell us in that essay the ultimate cause of the founding of the Bank of England.

What I have just discussed in Pound's essays of the 1930s and 1940s is met again in the cantos published during the same period, cantos XLII to LXXXIV. There is in them that which so annoyed Louise Bogan, "the growing tendency towards obsession. The obsessed always lack that final ingredient of greatness, humility. They are also invariably bad-tempered and vituperative. They hammer and scold."⁴⁰ The obsession we recognize in the last four decades of cantos is usury, which now and then becomes mixed with a virulent anti-Semitism—the same anti-Semitism that caused such a furor when Pound was awarded the Bollingen prize in 1949 for his Pisan cantos. Not that condemnation of usury is absent from the first forty-one cantos: it is introduced as early as canto XII, but in that canto usury is but one of various ills afflicting society, and so it is generally in the first forty-one cantos. In the last four decades, it is the obsession, and may very well have dictated the structure of the last forty cantos. Cantos XLII-LI are "usury" cantos, an isolating of the virus that afflicts western society; cantos LII-LXXI are pastoral cantos in the sense that they take us back to golden ages

³⁵ "Visiting Card," p. 51.

³⁶ "Economic Nature," p. 19.

³⁷ "America and the Second World War" (1944), p. 191.

³⁸ "Economic Nature," pp. 20-21.

³⁹ "Visiting Card," p. 46, and in "The Enemy is Ignorance" (1944), p. 108. Fraser (pp. 20, 72) says that Pound's attitude toward usury is similar to those of Cobbett, Carlyle, Ruskin and Tawney, and that hatred of usury was more or less traditional in American politics from Andrew Jackson and on.

⁴⁰ Quoted by Fraser, p. 109.

comparatively unsullied by usury, the America of John Adams and the China of sages and dedicated public servants. The Pisan cantos are meditations upon the ruin of the West. Most readers find the long stretches of Adamic and Chinese history rather trying, and indeed we have a simplification of method and lack of variety in this group of cantos, a real contrast with the kaleidoscopic quality of the first forty-one cantos.

Professor Kenner would have us read Pound's strictures on usury as synecdoche,⁴¹ and indeed if we take usury as a figure of speech for national and international greed and materialism, we have little to dispute, but there is nothing figurative in Pound's deadly serious computing of interest rates and national debt in cantos XLIII and XLIV. He literally means that usury is responsible for the ills of society. The most famous canto on usury is XLV, a cataloguing of the malign effects usury has on society. Far be it from me to defend usury—I have yet to meet anyone who approves of usury—but I fear that Pound somewhat overstates the case. In canto XLV we read that usury destroys the integrity of the artist, turns men from the spiritual to the materialistic, robs food of its life-giving qualities, degrades and corrupts the agricultural arts and ruins industry. It is cancerous and fatal. The great artists of the Renaissance came before the advent of usury:

Pietro Lombardo

came not by usura
Duccio came not by usura
nor Pier della Francesca; Zuan Bellin' not by usura
nor was "La Calunnia" painted.
Came not by usura Angelico; came not Ambrogio Praedis

Canto XLV has been frequently cited as one of the finest of Pound's cantos; indeed, it is remarkable for its imagery, its metrics and its feeling; it is eloquent, it is well, but it is not true, and fidelity to the facts of human experience must certainly be a component of aesthetic value in any work of art. Whereas I could not argue with canto XXIV, I find strong objections to the notion that usury precludes the existence of great art. Canto XLV, I say, is not Sabatte's *Mort du Premier Socialiste*.

Duccio, says Pound, came not by usura (repeated in canto LI), a statement to which few will take exception. But why, we may wonder, did Pound omit from his list Giotto da Bondone, Duccio's more eminent contemporary who was in the world of painting what Dante was in poetry, and is recognized today by historians of western art as the great innovator and herald of the style that was to be developed by such Ren-

⁴¹ "Broken Mirrors," p. 22.

aissance masters as Pier della Francesca, the Bellini and Fra Angelico, others mentioned by Pound who came not by usura? Giotto's master-work is the series of frescoes on the life of Christ in the Arena Chapel at Padua, and these are frescoes that every historian of western art must give days and nights to. But of more interest to me at present than the frescoes themselves is the building of the chapel (dedicated to the Virgin Mary but called the Arena Chapel because it is situated near the ruins of an ancient Roman arena). It is of interest to me, for instance, that funds for construction of the chapel were provided by Enrico Scrovegni, reputedly the wealthiest man in Padua at that time. Scrovegni may have built the chapel because of a sore conscience and perhaps for his father's soul; after all, Rinaldo, his father, renowned for shrewd financial practices, had acquired a mean reputation for usury as he accumulated his fortune. What happened to Rinaldo Scrovegni after his death we do not know, but we do know that Dante assigned him in the *Inferno* to the third ring of the seventh circle in Hell, the special abode of usurers and Florentine bankers. It is Rinaldo who bawls out to the poet making his descent through Hell that another Florentine banker is destined to join Rinaldo very shortly; having delivered the warning, Rinaldo "writhed his mouth awry and made / A gross grimace, thrusting his tongue right out / Like an ox licking its nose." A frightened Dante quickly left that "sad brigade" (Sayer's translation).

Duccio came not by usura; I am not suggesting that Giotto did, but I am suggesting that usury has a longer history in European civilization of the Christian era than Pound might care to admit, for the Arena Chapel was dedicated to the Virgin Annunciate on March 25, 1305. The famous frescoes in the Arena Chapel are not entirely unconnected with usury, and it is not impossible that Giotto received some of his fees from money gained through usury. Further, in 1913 Pound had cited (a "hackneyed example") the Medicis of fifteenth-century Florence as examples of millionaires who are remembered by posterity because they were generous in their patronage of artists, and Pound knew as well as anyone that the Medici fortune was not unconnected with the practice of usury. How, then, could he state so dogmatically in cantos XLV and XLVI that usury infallibly poisoned the arts? And yet we read in canto XLVI, "1527. Thereafter art thickened, thereafter design went to hell,/ thereafter barocco, thereafter stone-cutting desisted." Gold and usury were the "common sepulchre" of mankind, ruining art and causing widespread unemployment, vocational displacement, adult illiteracy, numerous industrial accidents and violent crimes in the "3rd year of the reign of F. Roosevelt." In canto L we read, in relation to England's wool trade, "the

arts gone to hell by 1750," and why the revision downward from 1527 I do not know. In canto LI again, "Duccio was not by usura"; in canto LII, which makes the transition to the Chinese cantos, overt anti-Semitism when he writes of war profits, gold exchange and "poor yitts paying for a few big jews' vendetta on goyim." He paraphrases the sagacious Mussolini: "better keep out the jew/ or yr/ grand children will curse you." The Pisan cantos, as I have said, are elegiac, the aged poet's meditations upon a world brought to ruin by usury: "As a lone ant from a broken ant-hill/ from the wreckage of Europe, ego scriptor."

"No poet of our time, or perhaps of any time," says Fraser, "has combined greatness and vulnerability as Pound has."⁴² The vulnerability came, I believe, when Pound "latched on" to a thesis and set out to save the world. With canto XXIV, the Niccolo d'Este episode, one cannot argue any more than one can argue with Sabatte's *Mort du Premier Socialiste*. But there is much material for argumentation in the usury cantos, when Pound forgets Sydney's dictum that "the Poet, he nothing affirms, and therefore never lyeth." Defective history brought to the support of a thesis quite inevitably vitiates and enervates poetry. We can, like Eberhart, make an attempt to separate the gold from the dross in the usury cantos, and when we do make the separation, we have eloquence without the force of truth. In canto XXIV, we have a modest eloquence rendering a powerful truth, but, paradoxically, in canto XXIV, Pound "nothing affirms"; much, however, is implied.

We do not, I believe, serve either Pound or poetry well when we pretend that we can admire his poetry and suspend our attention from nonsense about usury and puerile anti-Semitism. When we locate the nonsense and the foolishness, when we see that it is restricted to some of the cantos only, we find that Pound has a considerable achievement in the remaining cantos, an achievement free of nonsense and foolishness.⁴³ Let us, then, study and render praise where the cantos deserve such; the dross we may leave as an interesting but somewhat melancholy study of what happens when the poet becomes more interested in legislating than in writing poetry. Fraser has hit it again when he says the cantos have enough great poetry "to make them permanently of major importance . . . there is enough major achievement in the *Cantos* . . . to make Pound deserve our reverence."⁴⁴

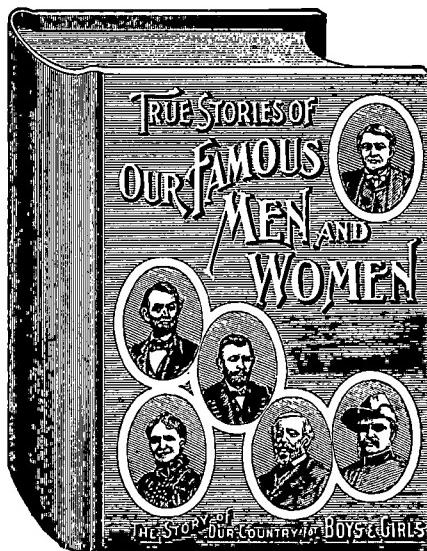
⁴² Ezra Pound, p. 112.

⁴³ It will be seen by the reader that I have evaded the controversies of poetry and belief by simply, in a manner 'Johnsonian,' dismissing that which I do not like. No amount of casuistry will persuade me to like errant nonsense, however eloquently that nonsense may be purveyed. I am aware of the issues, but reject the premises.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

By way of postscript, we may observe that Pound is in all likelihood the best refutation of his assertion that an age of usury precludes great art. I know of no instances in the past when the poet or artist has not had to struggle, if not against adverse circumstances or a hostile environment. (Dante exiled from his beloved Florence), at least against the terrible difficulties and severe discipline of bringing into being a great work of art—and who cannot but admire the intrepid and irrepressible old poet with grizzled beard and floppy Whitmanesque hat who was released from St. Elizabeth's Hospital after twelve years' incarceration, who had before suffered a nervous breakdown in detention (being kept in a cage) at Pisa in 1945-46, who had made a fool of himself in attaching himself to the cause of Mussolini, who had moved to the brink of treason against the country he loved, who has been the object of much hostile criticism and misunderstanding, and yet fares forth from St. Elizabeth's to return to Italy and write more cantos. His dedication to the task at hand is heroic by any standards; over forty years on the job, now, as he would put it. He has won honors, but in many ways he is like his seafarer, "care-wretched, on ice-cold sea . . . wretched outcast deprived of . . . kinsmen," and yet who has written so well

That all men shall honour him after
 And his laud beyond them remain 'mid the English,
 Aye, for ever, a lasting life's-blast
 Delight 'mid the doughty.



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Patriarchy: Old World and New

ONE OF THE MOST INTRIGUING ASPECTS OF POLITICAL THOUGHT IN THE PRE-Civil War era was the Southern infatuation with the patriarchal ideal. Defenders of plantation society retired into a fortress of father metaphors to protect their peculiar institutions. The tactic was not novel, for familialism, with its corollary of paternal authority, had figured in the thinking of Homer, Aristotle, Bodin, Hooker, Grotius and even God—as revealed in Scripture, while the centrality of the family in human history had made it synonymous with virtue in common thought. To succeed in presenting slavery as analogous to the filial subservience expected of sons to fathers would have been not merely to justify servitude, but to hallow it.

Familial similes came with understandable ease to the minds of Southern conservatives, since rural isolation, Biblical religion and the custom of relatives remaining together under the same roof emphasized the importance of the family unit.¹ Great consanguineous super-families, unofficial political units perhaps as significant as counties and states, provided the social linkage which held together the upper strata of Southern society. The major social functions revolved around marriage—elaborate courtship rites for belles and beaux and, as a gala denouement, the wedding. Presiding over these kinship rituals was the Southern patriarch, known variously as father, husband and “massa.” The very factors which strengthened the plantation family system contributed to his power. The extended family required a locus of leadership, rural isolation enabled the ascendant male to hold sway unchallenged, and the Biblical tradition of Adam and Abraham provided a solemn justification. The institution of slavery, furthermore, added little to the owner’s humility. His authority was born of economic necessity, social custom and Scrip-

¹ See Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, Vol. II, *From Independence through the Civil War* (New York, 1945) and Ernest R. Groves, *The American Woman* (New York, 1937), pp. 158-60.

tural sanction. He resembled nothing so much as a feudal lord—master and protector of the souls and bodies of wife, children, relatives and serfs. Observed one scholar,

- The plantation of the pre-Civil War South was the counterpart of the medieval manor. The planter was the repository of social dignity and judicial power, of political leadership, for his neighborhood, in quite the same fashion as the eighteenth-century English squire whom he strove to emulate.²

The landed aristocracy of Stuart and Georgian England provided a bridge between the ante-bellum South and European feudalism. They, after all, were both heirs of the manorial tradition and the sires of the American planter class. Political theories employed to legitimize the patriarchal institutions of the English gentry were equally congenial to the plantation ethos, and their usefulness was keenly appreciated by one of the leading Southern apologists.

In casting about for ideological assistance, George Fitzhugh, patriarch, lawyer and propagandist, rediscovered Virginia's distant Kentish relation, Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653), the codifier of authoritarian familialism. Sir Robert's *Patriarcha* (*circa* 1653) was an arsenal of paternalist thought and served the Southern tribune Fitzhugh as well in the nineteenth century as it had Cavalier spokesmen in the seventeenth and American Tory Jonathan Boucher in the eighteenth.³ Filmer's ties with the plantation South were not simply intellectual. His prolific second offspring begot a lineage which was related to "the Washingtons, the Byrds, the Berkelys [sic], and the Randolphs, and so to the Jeffersons. Whatever the subsequent literary and philosophical reputation of Sir Robert Filmer, he had been a great genealogical success."⁴ There has been a renaissance of interest in these two steadfast conservatives in recent years. Fitzhugh has been re-examined by Harvey Wish and C. Vann Woodward, and Filmer by Peter Laslett. Thanks to the groundwork of these historians, it is now possible to investigate the intellectual kinship between the Kentish knight and the Virginia "sociologist."

Only time and space separated Filmer and Fitzhugh: in spirit they were one. Both were lawyers, Filmer at Westminster and Fitzhugh at

² Rollin G. Osterweis, *Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South* (New Haven, 1949), pp. 16-17.

³ Sir Robert's two major appearances in American political thought were during the Revolution and the Civil War, both times on the losing side. The Filmer influence on Boucher may be seen in the Tory's anguish over child America renouncing her "Parent State." See Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution* (London, 1797), pp. 522-30.

⁴ Peter Laslett, "Introduction" to Filmer's *Patriarcha and Other Political Works* (Oxford, 1949), p. 10. Hereafter cited as *Patriarcha*.

Richmond, but neither permitted the bar to keep him long from his fireside. Their families were their favorite "clients." Filmer, a member of the scholar-gentry caste, "was pre-eminently a family man, the head of his own household in a society dominated by heads of households. Such also had been his father before him, and such were to be his son and grandson after him." A genealogist, Filmer possessed an "intense interest in his titles" which seems to have motivated his research in institutional history.⁵ Though the scattering of Fitzhugh's progeny and the infirmities of advancing years ultimately obliged the Virginian to forsake his family residence in Port Royal, he was no less concerned than Sir Robert with genealogy, tracing his forebears to William Fitzhugh, the seventeenth-century Virginia lawyer-planter-exporter, and confiding to his readers, "Love and veneration for the family is with us not only a principle but probably a prejudice and a weakness."⁶ He had a "flair for genealogy," but it led him less to scholarship than to propaganda. He was, said Wish, "particularly impressed by the fact that genealogy was a major prop of a conservative community."⁷ It was for good reason that both were conservatives⁸—each of them had something to conserve. The Filmer estate was located in the most prosperous of English countrysides,⁹ and Fitzhugh—whose home town of Port Royal enjoyed a colonial pedigree, a reputation for scenic charm and a nineteenth-century economic revival¹⁰—could write, "Nowhere is this conservative feeling stronger than in the Rappahannock Valley, for nowhere are people more easily situated and contented."¹¹ Both produced their

⁵ Peter Laslett, "Sir Robert Filmer: The Man and the Whig Myth," *William and Mary Quarterly* (October 1948), V, 544-45.

⁶ Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or Slaves Without Masters* (Cambridge, 1960, ed. C. Vann Woodward), p. 192. Hereafter cited as *Cannibals All!* On George's ancestor, see *William Fitzhugh and his Chesapeake World, 1676-1701*, ed. Richard Beale Davis (Chapel Hill, 1963).

⁷ Wish, *George Fitzhugh. Propagandist of the Old South* (Baton Rouge, 1943), pp. 16, 268.

⁸ On Fitzhugh's conservatism, see Arnaud B. Leavelle and Thomas I. Cook, "George Fitzhugh and the Theory of American Conservatism," *Journal of Politics* (May 1945), VII, 145-68.

⁹ An old jingle portrays the prosperity of Kent:

A Knight of Wales
A gentleman of Cales
A laird of the North Countree,
A Yeoman of Kent
With his yearly rent
Will buy them out all three.

Quoted by Laslett in "The Gentry of Kent in 1640," *Cambridge Historical Journal* (1948), IX, 154, n17.

¹⁰ Wish, *Propagandist*, pp. 13, 15, 21-22.

¹¹ Fitzhugh, "The Valleys of Virginia—The Rappahannock," *DeBow's Review* (1859), XXVI, 282.

major works when their cherished institutions were threatened by civil war, both continued determinedly as writers even after peace was restored, and the fame of both expired with the causes they had labored to promote.

The reader of Fitzhugh wonders whether a moratorium on historical development were declared between the English Civil War and the American. On the pages of the Virginian, who submitted Sir Robert's *Patriarcha* to "frequent reading,"¹² Cavalier confronts Puritan and Filmer faces Locke:

The Tories are conservative . . . agreeing with Sir Robert Filmer that all officers of government hold and exercise their offices by Divine Right. The Whigs are progressive, rationalistic, radical, and agree with Locke in his absurd doctrines of human equality and the social contract. . . . The North and South would pretty well supply the places, or act the part, of these forces in America.¹³

The same subversive notions which had plagued England had re-emerged in America. *Laissez faire*, thought Fitzhugh, was turning Northern laborers into free-floating atoms, unlovely and unloved, and the South was in mortal danger of a similar Lockean fate. Although Fitzhugh's patriarchalism was designed to buttress a slaveholding aristocracy and Filmer's to support the Stuart claim to monarchy, they took comparable grounds: the necessity—theological, philosophical, historical and practical—for authority above and obedience below.

Both took great care to build a Biblical foundation. Beginning with the implied primacy of Adam as a result of prior creation, adding the patriarchs of Israel, the Mosaic Law with its injunction, "Honor thy father . . ." ("and mother" was conveniently omitted) and its reference to the "full power [of] the father to stone his disobedient son," concluding with the teachings of Christ, the apostles and the Church fathers on obedience, Filmer had proved to his own satisfaction that since subjection of son to father was divinely endorsed, and since the King of England was "Father over many families," pious fealty should be tendered joyfully.¹⁴ Fitzhugh, notwithstanding the compilations of relevant texts already assembled by Southern ecclesiastics,¹⁵ produced a full repertoire of sacred citations, moving from the Israelites in bondage, Abraham and "the

¹² Fitzhugh, "The Revolutions of 1776 and 1861 Contrasted," *Southern Literary Messenger* (November & December 1863), XXXVII, 720.

¹³ Fitzhugh, "The Impending Fate of the Country," *DeBow's Review* (1866), II, 570.

¹⁴ *Patriarcha*, pp. 57-60, 62-63, 74-75, 77, 84-85, 96-100.

¹⁵ See William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*, pp. 200-11.

Patriarchs of Judea, under Moses and Joshua," to the New Testament apostles, calling attention to each scriptural approbation, explicit or implied, of the authoritarian family.¹⁶

They agreed with Aristotle that the family is the natural form of social organization,¹⁷ but Fitzhugh found him more companionable than did Filmer. The Kentsman, after inquiring rhetorically, "Do we not find that in every family the government of one alone is most fruitful?" proceeded to coerce agreement from the malleable Greek and concluded with victorious disdain, "What can a heathen say more?"¹⁸ Fitzhugh, in contrast, delighted in the heathen's company and concurred with him that "social life is as natural to man as to bees and herds; and that the family, including husband, wife, children, and slaves, is the first and most natural development of [man's] social nature."¹⁹ To a fellow admirer of Aristotle he effused, "I find I have not only adopted his theories, his arguments, and his illustrations, but his very words."²⁰ Fitzhugh's confidant in such matters was a fellow "sociologist," George F. Holmes, prominent Southern reviewer and, from 1857 to 1897, professor of history and literature at the University of Virginia. Holmes, who introduced the less literate Fitzhugh to Aristotle in 1855, was an appreciative student of the philosopher and no doubt communicated his enthusiasm to Fitzhugh.²¹ Had Filmer a Holmes for his mentor in matters sociological, perhaps he would not have received Aristotle's assistance so grudgingly.

¹⁶ *Cannibals All!*, p. 219, Fitzhugh's *Sociology of the South* (Richmond, 1854), pp. 96-104. Hereafter cited as *Sociology*.

¹⁷ *Patriarcha*, p. 79; *Cannibals All!*, p. 193.

¹⁸ *Patriarcha*, pp. 84-85. Filmer's comparative reluctance to rely upon the *Politics* seems to have been related to the fact that he was more religiously oriented—and more scholarly—than Fitzhugh. The author of *Patriarcha* recognized that "what cannot be found in scripture, many do look for in Aristotle," and though sacred documentation could be had in abundance, the profane philosopher's popularity required a deferential nod. Sir Robert was scholarly enough to realize that Aristotle did not possess his devotion to patriarchy but, instead, supposed the ideal government to be "a mixture of democracy and oligarchy." The Englishman tried to be charitable: "We cannot much blame Aristotle for the uncertainty and contrariety in him about the sorts of government, if we consider him as a heathen; for it is not possible for the wit of man to search out the first grounds or principles of government . . . except he know that at creation one man alone was made, to whom the dominion of all things was given, and from whom all men derive their title. This point can be learned only from the scriptures. . . ." Aristotle had his value, however, for—with or without Adam—"he deducted the original of government from the power of the fatherhood, not from the election of the people." *Observations Upon Aristotle's Politiques Touching the Forms of Government* (1652) in Filmer's *Patriarcha* (etc.), pp. 198, 203-4, 194.

¹⁹ *Cannibals All!*, p. 193.

²⁰ To George F. Holmes, 1855, quoted in Wish, *Propagandist*, p. 118.

²¹ See Holmes, "Observations on a Passage in the *Politics* of Aristotle." *Southern Literary Messenger* (1850), XVI, 193.

Sir Robert's historical readings, accomplished without the help of sociology, had assured him that "by the laws of the Persians and the peoples of Upper Asia, and of the Gauls, and by the laws of all the West Indies, the parents have power of life and death over their children," and that the Romans, under the laws of the Twelve Tables, could "sell their children two or three times over."²² Fitzhugh's gleanings from classical history, from Homer to Augustus, served him less to justify paternal authority than to illustrate the felicity, dignity and purity of the "close connection and subordination" of the members of the family circle.²³

It was not so much past history as contemporary necessity, however, which provided the decisive argument. The facts of socio-political life as Filmer and Fitzhugh saw them would allow no other form of management than that which was modeled upon the paterfamilias. Consent, whether among a citizenry or a family, was out of the question. "As Adam was lord of his children," wrote Filmer, "so his children under him had a command over their own children."²⁴ While Sir Robert moved quickly into the political realm to demonstrate the physical impossibility of deriving consensus from the multitudes, Fitzhugh tarried at the family level long enough to point out,

Fathers do not derive their authority, as heads of families, from the consent of wife and children, nor do they govern their families by their consent. They never take the vote of the family as to the labors to be performed, the moneys to be expended, or as to anything else. Masters dare not take the vote of their slaves as to their government. If they did, constant holiday, dissipation, and extravagance would be the result.

Their crusade against consent theory was propelled by a confidence that the superior qualifications of a patriarch made consultation superfluous. Would the captain call for a vote from his sailors, or an officer from his soldiers, queried Fitzhugh?²⁵ In Filmer's quaint analogy,

An implicit faith is given to the meanest artificer in his own craft; how much more it is, then, due a Prince in the profound secrets of government: The causes and ends of the greatest politic actions and motions of state dazzle the eyes and exceed the capacities of all men, save only those that are hourly versed in the managing of public affairs.²⁶

Both men had serious apprehensions about the durability of their favored systems. Conservative in their hopes, they were radical in their fears.

²² *Patriarcha*, p. 77.

²³ *Cannibals All!*, p. 193.

²⁴ *Patriarcha*, p. 57.

²⁵ *Cannibals All!*, p. 243.

²⁶ *Patriarcha*, p. 54.

Frightful visions of mobs, chaos and blood haunted their thoughts. Greece, Filmer cried, was visited with "wars of slaves" when it became too democratic; and in republican Rome, "The blood hath been sucked up in the market-places with sponges: the river Tiber hath been filled with the dead bodies of citizens, and the common privies stuffed full with them."²⁷ Fitzhugh echoed, "Riots, mobs, strikes, and revolutions are daily occurring. The mass of mankind cannot be governed by Law. More of despotic discretion and less of Law is what this world wants. . . . There is too much of Law and too little of Government in this world."²⁸ God, nature, history and expediency joined in the chorus of patriarchy. Surely, only a Roundhead or his nineteenth-century offspring would raise his voice in discord.

There was, however, an important difference between the two patriarchalists. Filmerian authoritarianism was not as pleasant, from the subject's point of view, as that of Fitzhugh. Sir Robert recalled that "Adam and the Patriarchs had absolute power of life and death . . . within their houses or families,"²⁹ a proposition with which he did not seem displeased; whereas Fitzhugh protested, "In no civilized country has the master the right to kill his slave."³⁰ Filmer went so far as to assert the patriarch's right over the underling's soul—granting or withholding the means of entry into the life to come—and the precedence of fatherly discretion over positive law. True, the *pater* would generally "preserve, feed, clothe, instruct, and defend," but Filmer reminded his readers, "Saul lost his kingdom for being too merciful."³¹ Fitzhugh's emphasis was a decided contrast: ". . . our Southern slavery has become a benign and protective institution, and our negroes are confessedly better off than any free laboring population in the world." Enveloped in "domestic affection," the slave,

. . . when night comes, may lie down in peace. He has a master to watch over and take care of him. If he be sick, that master will provide for him. If his family be sick, his master and mistress sympathise [sic] with his affliction, and procure medical aid for the sick. And when he comes to die, he feels that his family will be provided for. He does all the labor of life; his master bears all its corroding cares and anxieties.

²⁷ *Patriarcha*, pp. 87, 89. It is noteworthy that Fitzhugh, an exponent of the South's aspiration to the Greek ideal, should stand in the tradition of one who thought the city-states of antiquity, because of their incipient democratism, "mutations, . . . bloody and miserable." *Patriarcha*, p. 86.

²⁸ *Cannibals All!*, p. 248.

²⁹ *Patriarcha*, p. 76.

³⁰ *Cannibals All!*, p. 81.

³¹ *Patriarcha*, pp. 63, 96, 99, 103-5.

With a cradle-to-the-grave welfare program, it would appear more advantageous to be slave than master; and, indeed, Fitzhugh observed, ". . . the greatest slave [is] the master of the household."³²

The divergent directions taken by the two conservatives is particularly conspicuous when one considers the similarity of their respective theories of responsibility and limitation. Both relied on a combination of natural law and utility. "Every father is bound by the law of nature to do his best for the preservation of the family," said Filmer, only two sentences after declaring, "The father of a family governs by no other law than his own will."³³ Whereas Filmer was interested in neither the inconsistency of his premises nor in a further discussion of the charitable dictates of nature, Fitzhugh proceeded to detail the content of natural law. It was the quintessence of selflessness, "the preference of other's good and happiness, . . . self-abnegation and self-denial." Natural morality was incapacitated by a free society with its grasping and clawing, Fitzhugh held, but not on the plantation, where master and slave each acknowledged the other's interest to be his own, and where the weakness and dependence of the slave elicited the "benevolence, affection, . . . and paternal love" which "human law cannot beget."³⁴

Far more natural than indulging in benevolent whimsy, thought Filmer, was the patriarch's calculation of personal benefits:

The bodies of his subjects do him service in war, and their goods supply his present wants; therefore, if not out of affection to his people, then out of natural love to himself, every tyrant desires to preserve the lives and protect the goods of his subjects . . . and if it be not done, the prince's loss is the greatest.³⁵

Curiously enough, Fitzhugh agreed:

Self-interest . . . is everywhere the strongest motive to human conduct. Negroes are immensely valuable, and increase rapidly in value and in numbers when well treated. The law of self-interest secures human treatment to Southern slaves.

The Richmond lawyer was building an all-purpose sophistry. He went on to explain, "Man is not all selfish. . . . Within the family circle [i.e., in his slave relations], the law of love prevails; not that of selfishness."³⁶ Thus

³² *Cannibals All!*, pp. 201, 204; *Sociology*, pp. 52, 105-6, 167.

³³ *Patriarcha*, p. 96.

³⁴ *Cannibals All!*, pp. 205, 217. The irony of Fitzhugh's indulgence in natural law speculation while denouncing "abstracted" philosophers is appreciated by Benjamin F. Wright Jr. in *American Interpretations of Natural Law* (New York, 1962), p. 269.

³⁵ *Patriarcha*, p. 92.

³⁶ *Cannibals All!*, pp. 79, 205.

he was reasoning that man was primarily selfish but not entirely so, that selfishness was as beneficial as unselfishness, and that the extended family was at the same time free of selfishness yet through selfishness made more benign. Fitzhugh may have detested the egocentrism of Manchester economics, but that did not stop him from employing utilitarian arguments³⁷ with great imagination when the need arose. The fatherly slave-master would be generous "because his reflected enjoyments [e.g. the peace of an untroubled conscience, the loving gratitude of beneficiaries] will be a thousand times greater than any direct pleasure he can derive by stinting or maltreating them." Moreover, "A man loves not only his horses and cattle, which are useful to him, but he loves his dog, which is of no use. He loves them because they are his." Man loves to possess, hence loves his possessions regardless of their visible utility. In this sense, even the useless is useful and will be cherished, serving as it does to gratify the possessive instinct. People "are most sensibly selfish when they seem the most unselfish."³⁸ The moral was there for all to draw: the more avaricious the master, the happier the slave.

Despite his confidence in the restraints of natural morality, presumably functioning through conscience, and in the benevolence (or absence—take your choice) of self-love, and notwithstanding his conviction that "All the legislative ingenuity in the world will never enact so efficient a law" as that of self-interest, Fitzhugh in 1854 proposed that Virginia "make the master subject to presentment by the grand jury and to punishment, for any inhuman or improper treatment or neglect of his slave."³⁹ This was a sentimentalism which would have incurred the frown of a Filmer, whose researches had demonstrated, "There is no nation that allows children any action or remedy for being unjustly governed."⁴⁰ Filmer had convinced himself of his doctrines, Fitzhugh had not. The Virginian perhaps suspected that even slaves *with* masters could be fatherless.

What caused one publicist of patriarchy to remain serene in his dogma and the other to have second thoughts? The explanation lies in at least three factors—audience, purpose and time. Fitzhugh wrote to "convince the world,"⁴¹ Filmer to convince the convinced. Not published until twenty-seven years after the author's demise, *Patriarcha* had simply circulated in manuscript among the circle of landed worthies who comprised the gentry of Kent.⁴² Filmer was merely assuring patriarchs of the right-

³⁷ *Cannibals All!*, p. 217; *Sociology*, p. 46.

³⁸ *Sociology*, p. 95.

³⁹ *Patriarcha*, p. 96.

⁴⁰ *Cannibals All!* p. 5.

⁴¹ Laslett, "Sir Robert . . . , p. 532.

ness of patriarchy; Fitzhugh was also persuading unbelievers of its benevolence.

The familial analogy was also serving somewhat different causes. For Filmer, it was a justification of monarchy; for Fitzhugh it legitimized a slaveholding aristocracy.⁴² The relation of sovereign to seventeenth-century commoner was somewhat distant, occasional and theoretical. The relation of master to nineteenth-century slave, however, was immediate, perpetual and real. Understandably, humane sentiments would have figured more prominently in a defense of the latter than the former. Filmer was answering those who questioned his system's legality, Fitzhugh those who challenged its humanity.

The Virginian's reading of history aside, 1857 was not 1641. A nascent proletariat without "a single liberty, unless it be the right or liberty to die," affronted the sensibilities of an age conditioned to optimism in matters of human worth. The same Fitzhugh who cried out with Thomas Carlyle, "The world is daily rushing toward wreck while it lasts" could also affirm that "Man is social and philanthropic, and his affections, dammed up in one direction, find vent and gush out in another." In a moment of euphoria he declared, "An unexpected moral world stretches out before us."⁴³ He despised utopians yet was one himself, even as his plantation paternalism smacked of socialism and his hedonistic logic of utilitarianism, two other doctrines he disparaged. Historians of political theory have tended to represent Fitzhugh as the arch anti-liberal in the American tradition.⁴⁴ Clinton Rossiter finds that in Fitzhugh "[t]here is little or no compromise with . . . liberalism."⁴⁵ Louis Hartz, who has emphasized the thoroughgoing liberalism of American culture, points to Fitzhugh's desire for Southern industrialization but otherwise regards him as one of the few Americans to represent anti-Lockean thinking "in a highly integrated form." To add a footnote to Hartz, it could be suggested that there is a distinctly liberal flavor in Fitzhugh's hopeful optimism and in his attempt, however faltering, to exhibit concern for the victimized individual. These qualities may have been what Hartz had in mind when he spoke of the South's "Tory moralism," but they might as easily be attributed to the pervasive influence of liberal values.⁴⁶ As Harvey Wish

⁴² Fitzhugh himself was not far removed temperamentally from kingship; logically, it was but a step away. He was once even suspected of monarchial views. See Ottis Clark Skipper, *J.D.B. DeBow, Magazinist of the Old South* (Athens, Ga., 1958), p. 116.

⁴³ *Cannibals All!*, pp. 19, 66, 188, 204.

⁴⁴ Such a verdict carries out the view of some cultural historians that the ante-bellum South as a whole was anti-liberal in the post-Jeffersonian period. See, for example, Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1932).

⁴⁵ Rossiter, *Conservatism in America* (New York, 1955), p. 127.

⁴⁶ Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York, 1955), pp. 154, 182.

notes in his Fitzhugh biography, a generation of Southern children had been raised on textbooks imported from the liberal North, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold embarrassingly well below the Mason-Dixon line.⁴⁷ The South, saturated with *Harper's Weeklies*, had relinquished the nation's intellectual leadership and become a literary fiefdom of the North.⁴⁸ The Kentsman may have been fascinating, but Fitzhugh did not spend all his study time perusing *Patriarcha*. Much of it, in fact, was spent reading English journals.⁴⁹ He was part of the nineteenth century and its liberal culture, even in the American South.

There was another aspect of the times which helps explain why Fitzhugh took especial care to underscore the beneficence of patriarchy. It was the sort of problem which was endemic in any paternal system, but perhaps in Filmer's day it was less vexatious than in the more liberal century of Fitzhugh. A dual slavery existed in the South. The plantation system degraded not only the Negro, but even the master's wife. One study of the popular image of Southern society informs us, "The mistress of the plantation is a dim figure, as though matrimony faded womanhood into rapid indistinctness."⁵⁰ A cotillion coquette she might have been, but her little victories over the hearts of men were ephemeral compared to her life of virtual enslavement on the master's manor. Generalizations on this subject are difficult, particularly when one must pierce the romantic haze which surrounded womanhood in the neo-chivalric South. The charm and dignity of Mrs. Mary Boykin Chesnut's relation with her husband the Confederate general, as recorded in her famous wartime *Diary*, may well have been unique.⁵¹ It is clear from other works that the wedded life of many a Southern matron was no idyl.

The wife of the planter, on account of the nature of her husband's wealth, ordinarily had placed upon her an exacting task . . . and rarely had anything like the freedom enjoyed by the wife of a man of wealth in other sections.⁵²

It was expected that she superintend the well-being and early schooling of her extended "family"—slaves included—and minister faithfully to the needs of the master. She functioned as an unsalaried overseer of plantation health, education and welfare, and its tasks were demanding.

⁴⁷ Wish, *Propagandist*, pp. 164-65.

⁴⁸ Wish, *Propagandist*, p. 20.

⁴⁹ Francis Pendleton Gaines, *The Southern Plantation: A Study in the Development and Accuracy of a Tradition* (New York, 1925), p. 16.

⁵⁰ Chesnut, *A Diary from Dixie* (New York, 1905).

⁵¹ Groves, *The American Woman*, p. 154.

Said a Louisiana lady, "When President Lincoln issued his proclamation of freedom to our slaves I exclaimed: 'Thank heaven! I too shall be free at last!' " In such a system the master possessed a social latitude not available to the woman. The wife quoted above reminisced,

I early ascertained that girls had a sphere wherein they were expected to remain and that the despotic hand of some man was continually lifted to keep them revolving in a certain prescribed and very restricted orbit.⁵²

With the woman kept to her duties, the Southern male's freedom was appreciable. His legal eclipse of the Negro male offered certain temptations, and the development of a mulatto racial strain indicates that they were not always resisted.⁵³ A British anthropologist put it picturesquely:

Colour prejudices and arguments about Ham were forgotten when the moon rose and hung like a great Chinese lantern over the cotton fields. The Negro woman was not only complaisant; she was free from that ever-present sense of guilt and sin which still permeates all American society.⁵⁴

Because the planter's wife took her lot with relative quietude, it has been supposed that she enjoyed, or at least accepted, her subordinate status. Southern women generally championed the Confederate cause, and many are the tales of feminine gallantry behind the gray lines.⁵⁵ This acquiescence, surprising, initially, is understandable. First, the isolation of plantation living bred a parochialism which even *Harper's Weekly* did not fully penetrate. One woman recalled, "Confined exclusively to a Virginia plantation during my earliest childhood, I believed the world one vast plantation. . . ."⁵⁶ Second, the wife was dependent upon the male for sustenance and social status, there being scarcely any acceptable socio-economic role for independent females.⁵⁷ Third, it has been suggested that the master's spouse, resentful of his nocturnal cavorting, found the slave system a convenient outlet for her hostility toward femi-

⁵² Caroline E. Merrick, *Old Times in Dixie Land. A Southern Matron's Memories* (New York, 1901) pp. 12, 19.

⁵³ See Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family*, II, 295 ff.

⁵⁴ Eric John Dingwall, *Racial Pride and Prejudice* (London, 1946), p. 69.

⁵⁵ See Matthew Page Andrews, *The Women of the South in War Time* (Baltimore, 1920); *The Weekly News and Courier*, Charleston, S. C., "Our Women in the War" (Charleston, 1885); Francis B. Simkins and James Welch Patton, *The Women of the Confederacy* (Richmond, 1936).

⁵⁶ Letitia Burwell, quoted in Katherine M. Jones, ed. *The Plantation South* (Indianapolis, 1957), p. 56.

⁵⁷ Calhoun, pp. 310, 322-24.

nine Negro rivals.⁵⁸ Finally mention must be made of the fact that plantation wives were kept too busy having children to produce as well a women's rights movement.⁵⁹

His wife need not have been on the point of revolt, however, for the planter to perceive a latent maternal threat to patriarchy. The 1850s was a decade of emerging feminism in England,⁶⁰ and in the American North —Fitzhugh trembled — “strong-minded women” were on the loose as “Bloomers” and “Free Lovers.”⁶¹ Most distressing was the tendency of emancipated Yankee women to take leading roles in the abolitionist movement.⁶² They seemed to sense that equal rights concepts could be interchangeably applied to feminine and Negro servitude, even as the patriarchal theory, in the master’s hands, had a similar dual usefulness.⁶³ Below the placid surface of Southern family life were ripples of discontent. Angelina Grimké, daughter of a prominent Charleston judge, disgraced her father by becoming, with her sister Sarah, an outspoken critic of patriarchy. “Man,” she wrote, “is free to be despotic, selfish, proud, arrogant, lustful, brutal. Woman is reduced to the status of a tool.”⁶⁴ Ladies less notorious than the Grimkés also had bitter words.

A sister of President Madison said: “We southern ladies are complimented with the name of wives; but we are only the mistresses of seraglios.” * * * One planter’s wife declared in the bitterness of her heart that a planter’s wife was only “the chief slave of the harem.”⁶⁵

Well might the master fear for his continued dominance. Should the women’s rights craze take hold in the South, the liberated ladies might transfer their notions of equality to the Negro. Conversely, should the Negroes be freed by a wave of rebellion, humanitarianism and invading Yankees, there would emerge an independent Negro culture characterized by black maternal leadership.⁶⁶ The instructive example of a free matriarchal society co-existing alongside the patriarchal would not have been

⁵⁸ Dingwall, p. 69.

⁵⁹ Clement Eaton, *Freedom of Thought in the Old South* (Durham, N. C., 1940), p. 318.

⁶⁰ C. Willett Cunnington, *Feminine Attitudes in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1935), chap. vi.

⁶¹ Fitzhugh, “Black Republicanism in Athens,” *DeBow’s Review* (1857), XXIII, 21.

⁶² H. Addington Bruce, *Women in the Making of America* (Boston, 1928), pp. 156-87.

⁶³ See Helen Matthew Lewis, *The Woman Movement and the Negro Movement—Parallel Struggles for Rights* (Charlottesville, Va., 1949), pp. 55-65.

⁶⁴ Angelina Grimké, *Letters to Catherine E. Beecher* (Boston, 1938), p. 116.

⁶⁵ Calhoun, p. 308.

⁶⁶ This was a byproduct of the Southern denigration of the Negro father role. The patriarchal ideal in practice encouraged the development of a matriarchal subculture. See Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery* (Chicago, 1959), pp. 53-55.

lost upon the wives of the no longer masterful masters. The emancipation of Negroes might lead to the emancipation of women, or vice versa.

Fitzhugh was not unaware of all this. His patriarchalism was designed to uphold male as well as white supremacy. In his *Sociology for the South*, he drew attention to the fact that wives, like apprentices, imprisoned culprits, lunatics and idiots, were slaves "not in theory only, but often in fact."⁶⁷ He may have had in mind Mrs. Fitzhugh. She was her husband's "constant companion for almost fifty years," but we are told by Wish, who searched in vain for revealing references to Mary in George's letters, "She evidently occupied the unobtrusive role of wife and mother which Fitzhugh considered the only natural position for one of her sex."⁶⁸ Aware that the South's numberless "Marys" were not all as stoic as his, he naturally desired to reassure them that they were imprisoned in nothing but kindness.

Both in his day and this, Fitzhugh has been considered something of an extremist. This being the case, it has not been fully appreciated how revealing of Southern institutional theory were certain portions of his thought. His vituperative assault upon Northern wage slavery has received its full measure of attention,⁶⁹ while his expression of the patriarchal ideal has not been sufficiently recognized. There were two sides to Fitzhugh's thinking, the offensive and the defensive, and it was the latter which provided a foundation for the former. In building his defensive theory, his arguments paralleled—without duplicating—those of Filmer. Fitzhugh spoke in the same spirit and categories as Sir Robert, but without obvious borrowings or plagiarism. The Virginian's patriarchal theory, if not wholly original, was at least distinct. This is especially evident in his emphasis upon his system's benevolence. Several factors have been offered above to account for this turning, but at bottom lay the fact that patriarchy was under heavier attack in the nineteenth century than in the seventeenth. In Filmer's day, only its political expression, autocratic kingship, was disputed; in Fitzhugh's, the challenge was directed at the social undergirding—the extended, biracial plantation "family" and even the internal structure of the Southern white gentry family itself. Liberalism as well as slavery raised new questions about patriarchy which Filmer had not faced. Fitzhugh was forced to do so

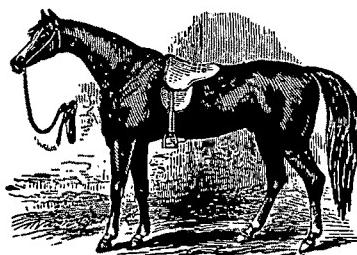
⁶⁷ *Sociology*, p. 86.

⁶⁸ Wish, *Propagandist*, p. 17.

⁶⁹ See Wilfred Carsel, "The Slaveholder's Indictment of Northern Wage Slavery," *Journal of Southern History* (1940), VI, 504-20; H. G. and Winnie L. Duncan, "The Development of Sociology in the Old South," *American Journal of Sociology* (1934), XXXIX, 649-56; Benjamin F. Wright Jr., "George Fitzhugh and the Failure of Liberty," *Southwestern Political and Social Science Quarterly* (1926), VI, 219-41.

and to frame his defense in terms acceptable to liberal culture. For this reason, his ideal was a warm and mellow thing, less patriarchy than paternalism.

It is this feature of his thinking which should give Fitzhugh intellectual longevity. Paternalism did not expire with Negro slavery. It has persisted in many forms in the "liberal" society which Fitzhugh had given up as hopelessly individualist. Increasing organization and bureaucratization have rendered American society daily less Lockean. The life of the modern corporate family, comfortably housed in factory or office-building on a suburban plantation, is not entirely foreign to the Southern ideal, where hierarchy and social control were evident but supposedly mitigated by the master's abiding concern for communal well-being. Though the father-function has been divided among a board of managerial patriarchs and the paternal attributes diffused into a less personalized corporate image, similar elements are present in the two paternalisms. History may remember Fitzhugh for presaging this new paternalism with its flavor of private socialism and its whiff of the feudal.



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Religion and Society: The Hicksite Separation of 1827

THE OPENING DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY WITNESSED THE BEGINnings of a social and economic revolution in America. The nation was preparing to take off into an industrial revolution. Roads and canals were built. Specialization of function replaced the universalism of eighteenth-century business enterprise. A factory system came into being. Skilled artisans were challenged by new methods of organization and production. In short, the tempo of economic change quickened to the point where the relatively stable society of the preceding century could no longer function. In its place was a society characterized by tumultuous change; change which altered social structure and patterns of mobility so rapidly that whole segments of society were pushed aside in the rush toward industrialism. Social dislocation was widespread.

Religious and political revolutions accompanied the socio-economic one. In the early nineteenth century, for example, America began an experiment in egalitarian politics. Both at the local and national level new issues came to the fore, thus promoting innovation in both political technique and ideology. Such well-known phenomena as Jacksonian Democracy and the Log Cabin Campaign of 1840 only symbolize a revolution which affected every area of political life. The nineteenth century would fight its political battles with new rules and new weapons and would fight them upon new grounds.

Recent study of the relationship between this political revolution and concurrent socio-economic change has been extremely fruitful. In pursuit of this theme of interaction such men as Lee Benson, Walter Hugins and Marvin Meyers have made substantial contributions to our understanding of nineteenth-century politics. For example, Marvin Meyers' study of the relationship between political rhetoric and social change suggests that an ideology which superficially seems to represent a monolithic whole actually conceals a multiplicity of motives ranging from a desire to restore the virtues of the pristine republic of the eighteenth century to an endeavor to push ahead toward the industrialism of the

twentieth. Here, then, is an excellent illustration of the importance of studying interaction and of seeing phenomena in their total environment.¹

This approach, which has proved so successful in the analysis of politics, has not been widely extended to the study of religion. Certainly there was a revolution in American religion between 1800 and 1840. Many denominations were split by doctrinal disputes. A new cycle of revivals swept the country. Missionary activity flourished. Tract and Bible societies were formed. The nation at large debated the use of Sunday mail. Communitarian religious experiments were tried. Surely this revolution was connected with the socio-economic one, yet that connection has not been adequately explored.²

Exploration of the relationship between society and religion is by no means an easy task. What makes it a particularly difficult problem is the complexity of the interaction of social and religious phenomena. Each not only influences the other but is in turn influenced by it. The process is one of reciprocal interchange. The problem is further complicated by the diversity of religious expression in America. One way of resolving these complexities is to focus solely upon the influence of society upon religion and to limit analysis to a single small religious group.

One group which lends itself to such analysis is the Society of Friends. It was both small and a participant in the religious revolution. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the Society of Friends was troubled by a series of doctrinal crises. This paper explores the relationship between one of those crises and its socio-economic environment.

The first and most serious of the doctrinal disputes which rent the Quakers resulted in the Hicksite-Orthodox Separation of 1827. On the surface at least, the story of this schism is relatively simple. In 1819, Elias Hicks, a Quaker minister from Long Island, was visiting Friends' meetings in Philadelphia. In his sermons, Hicks attacked the worldliness of Philadelphia Friends and suggested that worldliness might well be synonymous with unholiness. In doing so, Hicks stressed the overriding

¹ The author would like to express his thanks to the Summer Research Program at Douglass College-Rutgers University and its chairman James N. Rosenau. Under the sponsorship of the Program, two of the author's students, Catherine Small and Anita Weishaupl, spent a summer doing much of the research upon which this paper is based.

The above references are to: Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy* (New York, 1964); Walter Hugins, *Jacksonian Democracy and the Working Class* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1960); and Marvin Meyers, *The Jacksonian Persuasion* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1959).

² For examples of studies which do explore the relationship between religion and society see Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1950) and Emery Battis, *Saints and Sectaries* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1962).

importance of behavior as a measure of a man's religion. Hicks' statements were interpreted as a challenge by the leaders of the Philadelphia Quakers. They felt that Hicks' accusations were directed at them—that he was calling them unholy and questioning the validity of their leadership. Therefore, they made an immediate attempt to censure Hicks and then began a concerted effort to reduce his influence in the Philadelphia area. For the most part, they concentrated upon Hicks' doctrinal views rather than his social ones. The reasons for this emphasis are many. Hicks' peculiar doctrinal opinions lent themselves to this kind of attack. The contemporary religious climate encouraged doctrinal dispute and, perhaps most important, the Philadelphia leaders—the Orthodox faction—did not want to probe deeply into areas where they were particularly sensitive, i.e. their relationship with the world.³

In any case, Hicks never directly responded to Orthodox accusations that he denied the existence of the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, Christ's role in aiding atonement and the importance of the Bible. He simply rejected the significance of these accusations. His efforts to defend himself were in terms of what he felt were departures from proper organizational procedure on the part of the Philadelphia leaders. However, Hicks' friends took up the charges against him and attempted to refute their validity. By 1827, the dispute had become so intense that the annual meeting in Philadelphia split when the representatives could not agree upon the selection of a clerk. The split was not healed for more than a century.

The antagonisms which provoked the split were actually a good deal more complex than they might at first seem. Beneath the surface, the controversy involved issues which went to the very heart of Quakerism. Specifically, such questions were raised as: who should be a member of the Society of Friends, how should the Society be organized, how does a Friend seek salvation, and to what extent should a Friend accept the ways of the world? More generally, the debate between Hicksite and Orthodox centered upon the problem of who is a holy man and how does one recognize him? The answers which the two groups gave to these questions reflect different value systems and different interpretations of the nature of Quakerism.

The Orthodox wanted to make their peace with the secular world. They endorsed a formal religion which would emphasize belief rather than behavior—a system which would allow them to participate in the affairs of the world without the endless tension produced by quietism

³ It is important to clarify the use of the terms worldly and worldliness. They are used to indicate an interest in secular and material things and should not be taken as meaning sophisticated, knowledgeable or worldly-wise.

and emphasis upon works. They no longer wanted to hamper creaturely activity to the point where human desires were abjectly humbled. In short, they wanted a religion which would give meaning to—i.e. sanction and recognize—their activities in the world. Thus, they stressed the importance of doctrine. In their eyes, a religious man was one who believed in a specified set of religious ideas. This emphasis upon belief left considerable leeway as to what constituted proper behavior. In fact it did not raise this issue at all. A religious man need not, then, shun worldly activity. He need only believe the proper things.

The Orthodox also intimated that secular success might well be used as a guide to one's spiritual progress. They argued that the leadership of the Society of Friends should be put in the hands of the well-to-do. Important offices should be filled by these men. They should determine which beliefs were proper and which were not. The general membership should be passive and let the problems of belief, membership and salvation be resolved by those upon whom God had granted his blessings in the form of material wealth. It seems, then, that the Orthodox sought to create a religious situation which would allow them considerable latitude in behavior and would grant them religious recognition for secular success.

Elias Hicks and the Hicksites were opposed to this Orthodox program. Hicks was an outsider who challenged the leadership of the well-to-do in Philadelphia. He branded them as "unholy" men because they did not live up to prescribed works. Far from recognizing their secular success, Hicks saw the wealth of the Orthodox leaders as an indication of too much creaturely activity—too much of the world. Few of the Quakers who eventually became Hicksites fully endorsed Hicks' doctrinal opinions—the term *Hicksite* is a misnomer—but they all accepted his general emphases. They emphasized works. They felt activity, not belief, was the key to salvation. They refused to accept secular success as a measure of a man's religious influence. They refused to discriminate among their members. They directly opposed the creation of any formal hierarchy and encouraged spontaneous participation of all who felt the spirit of God within them. They restricted creaturely activity and participation in the world. In sum, they endorsed a system of belief and organization which would maintain strong and continuous tension between the believer and the world. There was no leeway here. All activity was overseen regardless of its nature. Certainly these doctrines flew in the face of the Orthodox.⁴

⁴ A summary of Hicks' ideas can be found in Bliss Forbush, *Elias Hicks: Quaker Liberal* (New York, 1960). Perhaps it will suffice here to suggest that Hicks and his ideas played a symbolic role in the Separation. His ideas were interpreted in a variety

In 1827, Quakerism had thus come to a crisis which threatened its continuance as a religious sect. It is important now to connect that crisis with its social and economic environment. First, however, it is useful to look at the nature and development of religious sects in general.

Time has a peculiarly corrosive effect upon religious sects. At their inception, sects offer a non-secular frame of reference which provides status and security to a membership drawn from among alienated segments of the population. Sects typically reject the values of the world and substitute their own norms both as a standard of behavior and as a means of seeking salvation. Understandably, new sects also tend to shun formal organization for a loose spontaneity relying upon lay participation.⁵

The most important factor in the process of sect formation and development is alienation. It is important, therefore, to understand precisely what it is. In general, it is a state of mind in which an individual feels that there is a discrepancy between his desires and the realities of his social situation. This attitude may encompass feelings of: 1) inability to influence and/or understand society and one's position in it; 2) estrangement from self and/or social norms; and 3) isolation from society in the form of assigning low values to goals which are highly esteemed by society at large or vice versa. Alienation exists within the mind and represents an attitude characterized by tension and estrangement.⁶

The strength of a religious sect lies in its ability to resolve that tension and estrangement. In order to do this, a sect needs to establish a delicate balance among the world, religious organization and doctrine, and its membership. This is a difficult task. Should the character of either the world or a sect's membership change, that sect will become subject to what might well be termed imbalance. Its response to this imbalance will determine whether or not and, in what manner, it will continue to function; thus, the corrosive effect of time.

of ways and thus were useful in one way or another to all the participants in the controversy.

⁵ The following discussion of sect-church development is based upon wide reading in the sociology of religion rather than any specific work. However, a few works ought to be cited for their specific usefulness: Liston Pope, *Millhands and Preachers* (New Haven, 1942); J. M. Yingler, *Religion, Society and the Individual* (New York, 1957); Bryan R. Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," *American Sociological Review*, XXIV (February 1959), 3-15; Benton Johnson, "A Critical Appraisal of Church-Sect Typology," *American Sociological Review*, XXII (February 1957), 88-92; and Harold F. Pfautz, "The Sociology of Secularization," *American Journal of Sociology*, LXI (September 1955), 121-28.

⁶ On alienation see: Melvin Seeman, "On the Meaning of Alienation," *American Sociological Review*, XXIV (December 1959), 783-91.

To some extent, sects have successfully coped with the problem of imbalance by isolating or insulating themselves from the world. This does not, however, eliminate problems stemming from internal changes and only postpones the effect of external ones. A sect may delay the resolution of these problems but ultimately it must come to grips with them or suffer gradual extinction.

The usual response of sects to the tensions of change is to move in a churchly direction—that is, toward formality, internal specialization, relaxation of emphasis upon works and increased acceptance of the world. The speed and precise direction of this process may vary from case to case, but the process itself seems universal.

Typically the growth of this churchly orientation is the byproduct of a decline in the general alienation of a sect's members and the emergence of an elite which has achieved success and status as defined by the outside world. The members of that elite have a stake in society. They are not estranged from the world. Thus, they are caught between their own commitment to the world and the sect's rejection of it. Since the sect denies the significance of their achievement and frequently brands them as "unholy" men, the members of this elite are forced to choose among three alternatives: 1) they may reject the world and their position in it; 2) they may leave the sect for another religious group which will sanction and recognize the significance of their achievement; or 3) they may seek to re-form the sect according to their own needs. The first of these alternatives has never proved very popular.

If the elite chooses to re-form the sect and is successful in its efforts, its success will be accompanied by strong objections upon the part of those members whose alienation is still high and whose needs would not be met by the program of the elite.

It should be emphasized that the tendency of sects to move in a churchly direction varies with different types of sects and will be rigorously resisted regardless of the kind of sect involved. Indeed, the successful negotiation of this process is likely to be accompanied by a schism. It must also be emphasized that a church-oriented sect may never come to accept a full church position. It possesses a number of intermediate alternatives.

Now the question arises—what does all this have to do with the Society of Friends and the Hicksite-Orthodox Separation of 1827? The answer is quite simple. It is the contention of this paper that the Hicksite-Orthodox schism ought to be seen as the result of tension between churchly and sectarian tendencies within the Society of Friends. Orthodox Friends sought to create a church-oriented society. Hicksites split off

from the Society in an attempt to preserve and restore its sectarian characteristics.

If this contention is correct, then the two groups—Hicksite and Orthodox—should fulfill the criteria suggested above. In general, they do. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to analyze differences in doctrine and organization. For the moment it is the author's impression that in doctrine and organization the Orthodox Quakers were church-oriented while the Hicksites were sectarian.⁷

Assuming this to be true, it is the purpose of this paper to explore the problem of the relative alienation of the members of the Hicksite and Orthodox factions. In accordance with the above discussed theoretical framework, the Orthodox faction, especially its leaders, should evidence a commitment to the world and low alienation and the Hicksites should tend to be the opposite.

The dilemma is how to verify this hypothesis, that is, to measure alienation. Ideally one would like to discover the states of mind of the participants in the schism. Particularly important in this respect would be their attitude toward the world. Unfortunately this can only be done indirectly. External evidence such as occupation, wealth and place of residence must be used to verify an internal state of mind. The dangers inherent in this indirect method are obvious. However, if enough data are collected and, if they all point in the same direction, generalization can be accurate.

It is useful to look first at the leaders and active participants in the Hicksite-Orthodox Separation:⁸

⁷ In his *Millhands and Preachers* Liston Pope lists 21 characteristics of sect-church evolution. Five of them do not apply to the Quakers. Of the remainder, the distribution among Hicksites and Orthodox is as follows:

	<i>Orthodox</i>	<i>Hicksites</i>
Churchly characteristics	10	2
Sectarian characteristics	3	14
Indeterminate or mixed	3	0

⁸ The following list does not include all the leaders and active participants in the Separation. Only those on whom data could be obtained are included. The term *real estate* refers to the assessed value of property holdings in the poor-tax records. The term *estate* refers to the total property holding revealed in the individual's will. The data were accumulated from a variety of sources: newspaper and magazine obituaries, Quaker memorials, general histories of the Society of Friends, local histories and the Philadelphia city directories. Most of the data on wealth came from the poor-tax records (MSS, Philadelphia City Archives) and from private wills of the persons involved. The author owes debts to many librarians for their assistance in locating these materials. The library staffs at Swarthmore College, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia City Archives and the Friend's Historical Library of Swarthmore College were especially helpful.

ORTHODOX LEADERS

Name	Birth-Death	Residence	Occupation	Wealth	Age in 1828
Othniel Alsop (1771-1836)		Phila.	vinegar merchant	estate: \$27,000	57
Samuel Bettle (1775-1861)		Phila.	clothing merchant	real estate: \$12,000	53
Jonathan Evans (1759-1839)		Phila.	gentleman-lumber merchant	real estate: \$7,500 and wide property holdings in Delaware Co., Pa.	69
Hinchman Haines (1767-1853)		Evesham, N. J.	?	?	61
Thomas Stewardson (1762-1841)		Phila.	gentleman-merchant	real estate: \$22,500 estate: \$70,000	66
Joseph Whitall (1770-1847)		Woodbury, N. J.	lawyer, farmer, teacher	?	58
Thomas Wistar (1764-1851)		Phila.	gentleman-merchant	real estate: \$14,700 estate: \$81,000	64

ORTHODOX ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Isaiah Bell (1772-1849)	Phila.	merchant	?	56
Henry Cope (1791-1865)	Phila.	merchant-importer	estate: \$677,000	37
Thomas P. Cope (1767-1854)	Phila.	merchant-importer	estate: \$1,500,000	61
Sarah Cresson (1771-1829)	Phila.	gentlewoman	real estate: \$13,000	57
Samuel P. Griffeths (1759-1826)	Phila.	M.D.	real estate: \$20,000	deceased
Richard Humphreys (1751-1832)	Phila.	gentleman-silversmith	estate: \$91,000	77
William Jackson (1746-1834)	Chester Co., Pa.	gentleman farmer	described as wealthy	82
Richard Jordan (1756-1826)	Newtown, N. J.	farmer	?	deceased
Isaac Lloyd (1779-1850)	Phila.	merchant	real estate: \$61,000	49
Israel Maule (1779-1828)	Phila.	lumber merchant	estate: \$40,000	49

<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth-Death</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Wealth</i>	<i>Age in 1828</i>
Caleb Pierce (1764-1853)		Phila.	hardware merchant	real estate: \$3,000	65
Edward Randolph (1754-1837)		Phila.	gentleman—East India merchant	described as extremely wealthy	74
Joseph Scattergood (?-?)		Phila.	druggist—chemist manufacturer	estate: \$155,000	?
Leonard Snowden (1751-1832)		Phila. N. Liberties	china merchant	estate: c. \$8,000	77
Ellis Yarnall (1757-1847)		Phila.	gentleman—merchant	real estate: \$10,500	71

HICKS SITE LEADERS

Clement Biddle (1778-1856)	Phila.	sugar refiner-importer	real estate: \$3,400	50
Samuel Comfort (1777-1862)	Bucks Co., Pa.	teacher-farmer	? (owned small farm)	54
John Comly (1773-1850)	Byberry, Pa.	teacher-author	estate: \$12,000	55
Benjamin Ferris (1780-1867)	Wilmington, Del.	conveyancer-author artist-surveyor	estate: \$50,814	48
William Gibbons (1781-1845)	Wilmington, Del.	M.D.	estate: \$2,900	47
Halliday Jackson (1771-1841)	Darby, Pa.	teacher-farmer	estate (1831): \$6,300	57
Abraham Lower (1776-1841)	Phila. N. Liberties	cabinetmaker	estate: \$900	52
Samuel Noble (?-?)	Jenkintown, Pa.	farmer-bank president	described as extremely wealthy	?
William Poole (1764-1829)	Wilmington, Del.	silversmith— milling business	estate: \$950	64
William Wharton (1791-1856)	Phila.	gentleman—never worked	real estate: \$2,600	37

HICKSITE ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

<i>Name</i>	<i>Birth-Death</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Occupation</i>	
William Abbott (1778-1853)		Phila.	brewer	real estate
Edward Garrigues (1795-1889)		Phila.	druggist	real estate
Isaac T. Hopper (1771-1852)		Phila.	tailor	real estate
John Hunt (1740[?]1824)		Phila.	accountant	?
Joshua Lippincott (1776-?)		Phila.	auctioneer	real estate
John Moore (1778-1836)		Phila.	M.D.	estate
Robert Moore (1764-1844)		Phila.	M.D.	?
James Mott (1788-1868)		Phila.	commission merchant	real estate in 1868
Joseph Parrish (1780-1840)		Phila.	M.D.	real estate
Josiah Roberts (?-?)		Phila.	bank teller	?
Isaac Townsend (1773-1865)		Phila. N. Liberties	laborer	estate
Joseph Turner (1765-1841)		Maryland	farmer	owner
James Walton (1771-1846)		Abington, Pa.	farmer	estate
John Watson (1774-1864)		Bucks Co., Pa.	farmer-surveyor	?

Certainly in the case of the Orthodox the data confirm the hypothesis. The active Orthodox possessed wealth and engaged in what would be generally accepted as high prestige occupations. In addition, none of their occupations was threatened by economic change, with the possible exception of the one skilled artisan, a silversmith. The Orthodox leaders had achieved security, prestige and material success in the outside world. It is natural that they might want a religious sanction and recognition for their secular success which would relax the tension between themselves and the world. In principle at least, the Society of Friends was ambivalent about sanction and directly opposed to recognition. Thus, the Orthodox sought to obtain explicit acceptance by modifying Quaker doctrine and organization in a churchly direction.

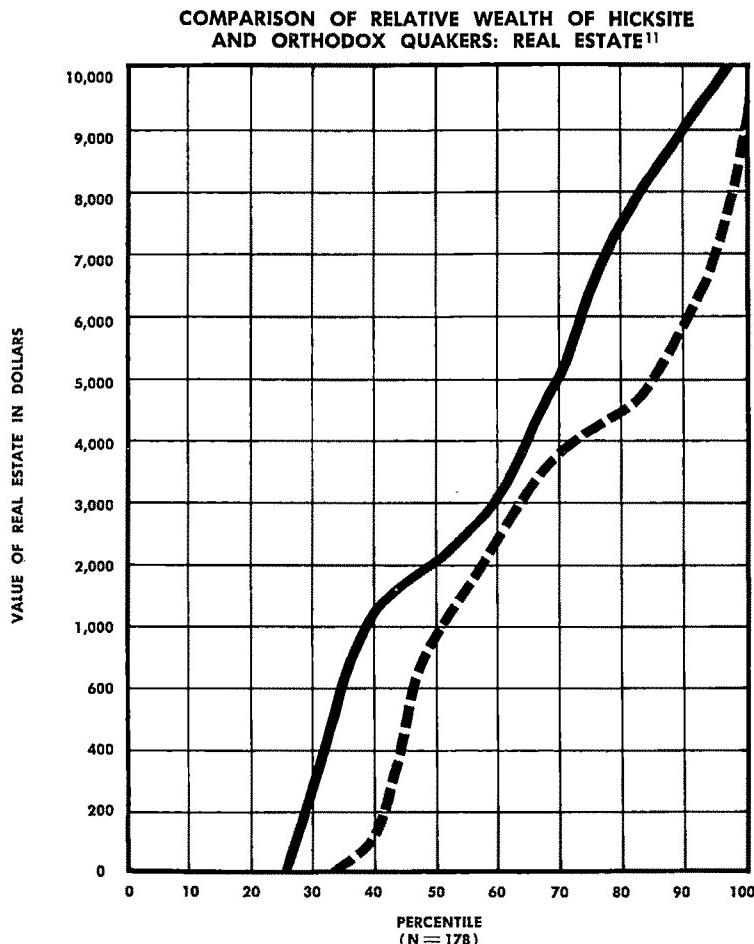
The Hicksite case is more complex. In theory the Hicksites should evidence a high degree of alienation, yet the data seem to reveal no consistent pattern of socio-economic characteristics. However, it is interesting that two of the active Hicksites were skilled artisans and one was a laborer in an age which witnessed a decline in the status of people who performed physical labor and, at the same time, saw the development of economic specialization under the merchant capitalist. The alienation of these three men might be attributed to their anxieties about social and economic change. Such a conclusion is at best highly tenuous and certainly does not provide any over-all insight into the broad character of the Hicksite movement.

In general, additional bases for the estrangement of the active Hicksites must be found. Unfortunately, the limitations of this paper will not allow adequate analysis of this problem. Nevertheless, the following suggestions might be made as to the sources of Hicksite alienation: 1) suspicion of the city; 2) commitment to social values which were threatened by Orthodoxy; 3) resentment of Orthodox social climbing; 4) psychological shock resulting from worldly failure; and 5) commitment to egalitarianism and/or religious freedom, both of which were felt to be challenged by Orthodoxy. Detailed research may reveal that there were other factors involved. For the moment these must suffice. What is quite clear is that the Hicksite impulse was heterogeneous in nature. Its unifying characteristics were a general alienation from the world and a suspicion of Orthodoxy.⁹

An examination of the leaders and active participants does, then, sustain the hypothesis of this paper and suggests that at least part of the sect-church concept can be applied to the Hicksite-Orthodox schism. Further support can be obtained from an analysis of the general membership of each faction. Here again Orthodox alienation should tend to be low and Hicksite high.

⁹ The statement on the sources of Hicksite alienation is based upon the author's study of the letters, Journals and published writings of the leading Hicksites.

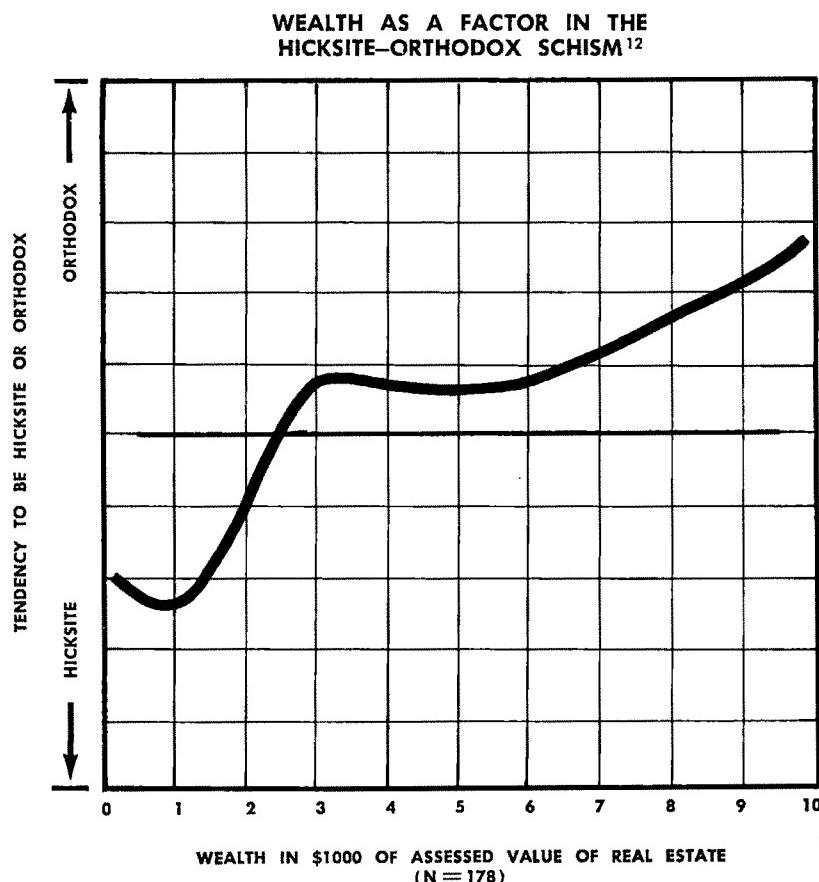
A crude and not altogether accurate way of measuring alienation is simply to compare the relative wealth of the two groups:¹⁰



¹⁰ Sociologists argue with considerable force that social mobility, not wealth or social status, is the primary source of anomie and alienation. They especially emphasize the importance of the rate of mobility as a key to understanding relative degrees of alienation. All this is perfectly true. An upwardly mobile individual may well experience feelings of "normlessness" in his new position. However, the anxieties of the upwardly mobile are likely to be more concerned with problems of adaptation to social structure and norms than rejection of them. In an acquisitive society like that of early nineteenth-century America which emphasizes openness, equality of opportunity and competitiveness, low social status can be used as an indication of alienation. In a society of this kind, low social status or lack of mobility is tantamount to failure. An excellent discussion of the problem of anomie and alienation can be found in Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York, 1957), 131-94.

The graph clearly suggests that the Orthodox Friends were wealthier than the Hicksites. A higher percentage of the Orthodox owned real estate and what they owned was more valuable than that of their Hicksite counterparts.

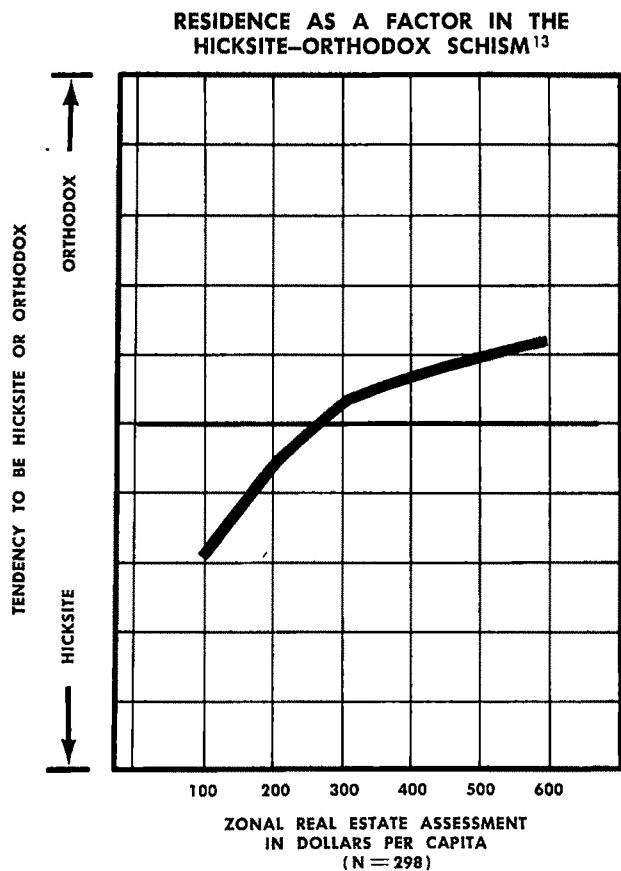
This rough comparison of the relative wealth of the two groups can be further refined by concentrating upon wealth as a factor in the tendency to become Hicksite or Orthodox:



¹¹ The graph is based upon the real estate assessments for the Philadelphia city poor tax. No other general tax records are available for this period. The author had hoped to make a quantitative analysis of the kinds of wealth held by the members of the Hicksite and Orthodox groups. Without additional tax records this is extremely difficult. However, it is the belief of the author that the Orthodox were much more inclined to hold personalty than the Hicksites. Examination of more than 100 wills confirms this impression. Some of the Orthodox leaders held as much as \$100,000 in stocks and bonds.

The diagram further substantiates the relationship between wealth and the Separation. For the most part, wealthy persons became Orthodox while the less well-to-do joined the Hicksites. Even admitting the weaknesses of using wealth as a measure of alienation, the tendency of the data to confirm the hypothesis is so strong that it does seem justifiable to assume that low and high alienation were characteristic of the Orthodox and Hicksite groups.

Additional evidence reinforces this conclusion. If place of residence is used as a measure of social status, it appears that Orthodox Friends tended to live in more expensive neighborhoods and thus, as a group, probably possessed higher social status.



¹² The data are based upon poor-tax records. The curve was obtained by plotting percentages of people who became Hicksite or Orthodox against their wealth in real estate.

Status and alienation can also be measured in relation to occupation. Orthodox Friends should belong to high status occupations which were not threatened by contemporary economic change and, of course, Hicksites should tend toward the opposite extreme.¹⁴

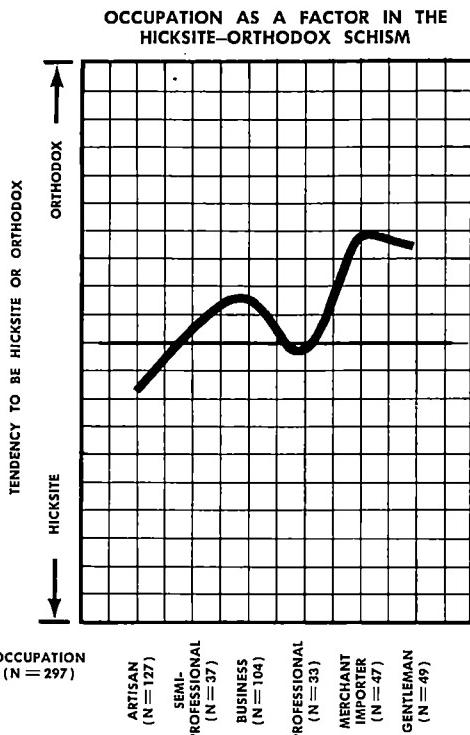
OCCUPATION DISTRIBUTION OF HICKSITE & ORTHODOX FRIENDS IN PHILADELPHIA, 1828¹⁵

Occupation	Hicksite		Orthodox	
	number	per cent	number	per cent
Gentleman	17	10	32	15
Merchant- Importer	14	8	33	15
Professional	12	7	11	5
Business	42	23	62	30
Semi- Professional	18	10	19	9
Artisan	74	41	53	25

¹³ The curve was obtained by plotting percentages of people who became Hicksite or Orthodox against the zones in which they lived. The zones are coterminous with electoral wards. The zonal figures were obtained by dividing the total real estate assessment per ward by the total population of that ward. The technique used here is based upon the one used by William A. Sullivan in "Did Labor Support Andrew Jackson," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXII (December 1947), 569-80.

¹⁴ Social status is a difficult concept to deal with, especially in a historical context. Participants in the Hicksite-Orthodox schism did express ideas about status. Therefore, it does seem justifiable to apply the concept to the Separation. The difficult problem is to assign status ranks. The system used here is based upon the author's impressions gathered from reading the literature of the period—especially the views of foreign travelers, and upon the schemes presented in Merle Curti *et al.*, *The Making of an American Community* (Palo Alto, Calif., 1959), 222-58.

¹⁵ Almost all the data on occupation come from Robert DiSilver, *DiSilver's Directory and Strangers Guide, 1824-1835*.



The general tendency of the data is as it should be—the Orthodox were more inclined to be engaged in occupations which would bring them both status and wealth. This tendency becomes more clear when the large categories of business and artisan are broken down. At least 60 per cent of the Orthodox artisans owned their own shops. Less than 20 per cent of the Hicksites fall in the same category. Poor-tax payments also indicate that Orthodox businessmen were inclined to be engaged in large-scale enterprises and the Hicksites in small. In addition, property records show that Orthodox businessmen and artisans were more likely to own real estate than Hicksites.¹⁶

Occupation can be used as a measure of economic status as well as social position. Sixty per cent of the Hicksite artisans engaged in activities which were threatened by specialization in the clothing and building trades. Only 30 per cent of the Orthodox artisans were similarly occupied. Furthermore, at least 90 per cent of these Hicksite artisans were in fact

¹⁶ The author's assumption is that any artisan owning his own shop would be a master and that any artisan owning both a shop and a dwelling house would be well-to-do. This assumption is confirmed by poor-tax payments and property holdings. Real estate holdings can be found in the Registry of Deeds (MSS, Philadelphia City Archives).

being adversely affected while, at the very most, 70 per cent of the Orthodox artisans in these occupations were undergoing the same process. This same trend is characteristic of the occupations of the two groups when taken as a whole. A comparison of the effect of economic change upon Hicksite and Orthodox occupations suggests that the Hicksites were more likely to be adversely affected than the Orthodox. Indeed many more Orthodox were actually benefitting from economic change:

EFFECT OF ECONOMIC CHANGE UPON HICKSITE AND ORTHODOX OCCUPATIONS¹⁷

Effect of	economic change	per cent of Hicksites	per cent of Orthodox
positive		15	30
neutral or indeterminate		45	50
negative		40	20

It is logical that those men who were adversely affected would tend to be alienated from the world while those who were being positively affected would be likely to take an opposite view. Again, it appears that Hicksite alienation was high and Orthodox low.¹⁸

It is, then, quite clear that the general membership of the Hicksite and Orthodox factions possessed the same general pattern of low and high alienation which was characteristic of their leaders. The bases for alienation or lack of it may vary between leaders, active participants and general membership but the direction does not. The Hicksite-Orthodox Separation was clearly influenced by the pressure of socio-economic change upon the Society of Friends.

In many ways the analysis of the Hicksite-Orthodox schism presented in this paper is excessively simple. It seems to suggest that the participants

¹⁷ The above table is, to be sure, based upon a series of guesses. However, when no clear relationship between an occupation and economic change could be established, that occupation was put in the neutral or indeterminate class. The other two categories should be reasonably accurate. No occupation was put into the positive or negative group without some concrete evidence.

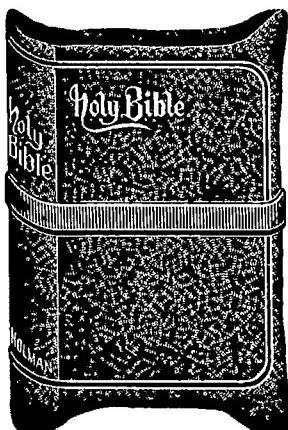
¹⁸ Both the clothing and building trades were undergoing rapid change at this time (c. 1830). Tension was especially high among the Journeyman in these trades. Masters, as yet, were not subject to problems of the same intensity. Labor conflict in Philadelphia at this time was between Journeyman and Master. See: John R. Commons *et al.*, *History of Labour in the United States*, I (New York, 1921), 88-107, 185-231. The figures above represent the author's attempts to discriminate between Journeyman and Master. Here again, the author assumed that anyone owning his shop would be a Master.

in the schism were consciously seeking to use religion for secular purposes. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Both Hicksite and Orthodox Quakers were sincerely engaged in a religious controversy. Nevertheless, religion played such an important role in their lives that any dispute over religion was bound to involve problems of secular behavior.

The Quakers saw their world in religious terms. They did not recognize a dichotomy between religious and secular life. Their world was an organic whole. They interpreted that world through religion. All this paper really intends to suggest is that the religious positions taken by the participants in the Separation were strongly conditioned by secular pressures. Given the organic view of the Friends, this was inevitable.

Hopefully, this paper will also provide new insights into the history of American Quakerism. Certainly it presents a frame of reference which adds new and unexplored dimensions to the Hicksite-Orthodox schism. It also raises such questions as: did the Hicksite proclivity for social reform grow out of their alienation and emphasis upon works? Unfortunately that is a question which cannot be answered here. For the time being it is enough to say that the Hicksite-Orthodox schism was the byproduct of the interplay of religion and society. It was an argument about sect and church.

This illustration of the influence of society upon the Quakers may not be a representative enough case to allow it to become the basis for generalization about American religion as a whole, but it suggests a fruitful subject for future research. The American religious revolution of the early nineteenth century did not occur in a social vacuum. The connection between religion and its socio-economic environment should be traced. Religion ought to be seen as part of a cultural whole.



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Henry Adams' Paraphrase of Sources in the *History of the United States*

HENRY ADAMS' TECHNIQUE OF WEAVING QUOTATIONS INTO HIS NINE-VOLUME chronicle of the administrations of Jefferson and Madison has more than once drawn vigorous applause. W. H. Jordy, for example:

Just as the consummate novelist plans every incident that each may define character and motivation more precisely, while each simultaneously advances the narrative, thus Adams utilized the document. So skillfully was research fused into narrative, so inexorably did the findings in one document anticipate the next that the reader is almost unaware of the historian's manipulation.¹

Or not less the biographer, Ernest Samuels:

If the past were to be recreated as it truly was, and yet with the ironic perspective of subsequent knowledge, nothing could surpass this method of interweaving contemporary accounts to give the illusion that neither the wear of time nor the preconceptions of the historian stand between historical reality and the reader. Perfected in the *History*, the device became in his hands an extraordinarily supple instrument especially in dealing with debates in Congress or the complexities of diplomatic interchanges.²

Jordy and Samuels chart a primary artistic impulse in the *History*, though as it happens both consider only those portions of Adams' source documents that appear as quotations on its pages. What can be done further with patience requires the comparison of all the *History's* text

¹ Henry Adams: *Scientific Historian* (New Haven, 1953), p. 56.

² Henry Adams: *The Middle Years* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 395-96.

with all of Adams' known and available sources. Here, using Adams' own footnote acknowledgments for authority, I propose to illustrate a few working conclusions drawn from an examination of some 130 of the 190 published references he cites during the course of the nine volumes. More than two thousand of his footnotes came under review and, beyond that, hundreds of passages which, though unfootnoted, nevertheless borrow the very phrasing of his authorities. One bare way to summarize this statistically is to say that Adams derives the language and syntax of roughly a sixth of his own prose from that of his sources.

It may surprise some to learn that Adams paraphrases his documents continually and closely. Yet that fact in itself does not offer much food for thought: certainly all narrative historians do the same thing, consciously or unconsciously, to some extent. What is interesting, it seems to me, is the art Adams employs when he does so, an art related to, but at times even more impressive than, that which Jordy and Samuels have described.

In general, Adams uses his documents in two ways. On the one hand he liberally quotes, even more liberally paraphrases, and at the least uses piecemeal for detail eyewitness accounts, official and unofficial letters, and other kinds of first-hand documentary evidence, thereby creating, as Yvor Winters says, "the impression of adhering very closely"³ to his sources. On the other hand, he manipulates the documents, especially when paraphrasing, for telling and subtle argumentative effects and reshapes and polishes their language when it is ungraceful or ungrammatical, thereby molding them to the demands of his own argument and style.

Both efforts stemmed from deeply held convictions about historiographical and literary method. Adams' adherence to the documents was the offspring, of course, of his admiration for Ranke and Ranke's followers, whose dictum that the historian should scour the archives for original documents and then let the documents relate the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen* became imbedded in Adams' own practice. He urged his students at Harvard to "appreciate and to use the German historical method";⁴ and in his celebrated seminar he closely followed the form and content of the *seminar* Ranke himself originated in Berlin in 1834.⁵ And his manipulation of the documents followed, at least in terms of style, from his lifelong commitment to a technique of revision he never

³ *In Defense of Reason* (Denver, 1947), p. 417.

⁴ HA to HC Lodge, June 2, 1872, *Letters of Henry Adams 1858-1891*, ed. W. C. Ford (Boston, 1930), p. 228.

⁵ G. P. Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (2nd ed.; London, 1928), p. 114.

tired of preaching—that of condensing and eliding: "My criticisms are always simple; they are limited to one word:—omit! Every syllable that can be struck out is pure profit, and every page that can be economized is a five-per-cent dividend."⁶ His method is the reverse of that used, for instance, by Francis Parkman. Parkman, as Otis Pease has shown,⁷ adds descriptive and narrative elements to his documents, when he paraphrases them, in order to make the reader feel he is himself experiencing the events they report. Adams, far from embellishing his documents, trims and cuts them till they stand in their leanest, most muscular form. Like Parkman, he was simply too much the artist not to improve them, though in a manner unlike Parkman's, especially when they were cast in the bloated, stilted and humorlessly detached "officialeze" favored by most of his authorities.

Since, then, Adams' treatment of his documents in the *History* is interesting chiefly in terms of style and method, it can be most efficiently studied, I think, in a single, representative passage. It is obviously impossible even to sample the rich variety of passages found throughout the *History*, and this one instance will have to stand synecdoche for all the rest. In the second chapter of Volume VI, Adams recounts the duel that occurred May 16, 1811, about fifty miles east of the Maryland coast, between the U. S. frigate *President* and the British sloop *Little Belt*. The American reports of the action completely disagree with the British, the British crew insisting the Americans fired the first shot, the American crew absolutely denying the charge. Contrary to the claim of the American captain, John Rodgers, that he did not know until the morning after the battle that the *Little Belt* was less than half as powerfully armed as the *President*, the British maintained that Rodgers, knowing full well what the *Little Belt* was, ran her down and brutally opened fire on her.

Adams accords the incident one of the most minute and careful analyses of documentary evidence in the *History*. After giving the first six pages of the chapter to a narrative of the battle itself, he spends the next seven weighing and testing the reliability of the British reports, and when he makes his transition between the two sections he openly apologizes for interrupting the narrative flow of the *History* with such weighty scholarship: "For this reason some little effort to form an opinion on the subject deserves to be made even at the risk of diffuseness."⁸ He concludes that the American documents are trustworthy and that the British documents are not. Buttressed by the testimony of all the officers and

⁶ HA to Emily Ellsworth Ford, March 30, 1886, *Henry Adams and His Friends*, ed. H. D. Cater (Boston, 1947), p. 548.

⁷ Parkman's *History: The Historian as Literary Artist* (New Haven, 1953), pp. 60-63.

⁸ Adams, *History of the United States of America* (New York, 1889-91), VI, 33.

seamen on board the *President* and by Adams' demonstration of error in the British report, the conclusion seems reasonable and convincing—as Adams might say, "scientific." What seems surprising, given the hotly argued discrepancies between the versions and the impossibility of knowing exactly what were the motives behind and the conduct of the battle, is Adams' decision to use only American documents in the narrative that precedes the evaluation. What he does is to narrate the battle completely from the American point of view, paraphrasing sympathetically and closely two of Rodgers' own letters, before pointing out that the British and American reports do not agree. His strategy, of course, is double-timed: he presents a lively narrative of the battle before asking the reader to wade into the "diffuseness" of the "scientific" analysis; and in his narrative he carefully prepares the reader to accept the American point of view before he asks him to weigh the accounts.

In the first three paragraphs of the chapter, Adams sets Rodgers to sea with pugnacious orders from the American Secretary of the Navy, Paul Hamilton, in hand. Then in his fourth paragraph he begins his narrative of the battle proper with a paraphrase of a letter, submitted by Rodgers to the American court martial held three months after the battle, in which Rodgers justifies his pursuit of the *Little Belt*:

Source:

At this time, I discovered by the newspapers that a British frigate, supposed to be the *Guerriere*, had, in the vicinity of Sandy Hook, and during my absence from the station, impressed out of the American brig *Spitfire*, bound coastwise, a young man by the name of Diggio, an American, and apprentice to the master of the brig. On the 16th of May, at a little past meridian, being at the time in seventeen fathoms water, about fourteen or fifteen leagues to the northward and eastward of Cape Henry, and about six leagues from the land to the southward of Chingoteague, a sail was discovered to the eastward, standing towards us under a press of canvass, which I soon made out,

History:

Rodgers was bound for New York, but on the morning of May 16 was still about thirty miles from Cape Charles and eighteen miles from the coast, when toward noon he saw a ship to the eastward standing toward him under a press of canvas. As the vessel came near, he could make her out from the shape of her upper sails to be a man-of-war; he knew of no man-of-war except the "*Guerriere*" on the coast; the newcomer appeared from the quarter where that frigate would be looked for, and Rodgers reasoned that in all probability she was the "*Guerriere*." He decided to approach her, with the object of ascertaining whether a man named Diggio, said to have been

Source:

by the shape of her upper sails, as they became distinguishable from our deck, to be a man-of-war. Not having heard of any other ship of war than the before-mentioned frigate being on our coast, I concluded (and more particularly from the direction in which she was discovered) that it was her, and accordingly determined to speak her.

. . .¹⁰

History:

impressed a few days before by Captain Dacres from an American brig, was on board. The spirit of this inquiry was new.⁹

The example reveals several aspects of Adams' reconstruction of source material. In line with his habit of condensing, he cuts more than thirty words from Rodgers' letter even while following it almost verbatim at one point and adding commentary of his own at several others. Such trimming, of course, requires extensive grammatical and structural reorganization. A device used often in the *History* is visible in Adams' second sentence, where he places in series four balanced and closely related independent clauses that stand in Rodgers' letter as awkwardly and loosely joined statements. The tightly organized series, whether of clauses, phrases or individual words, is in paraphrase after paraphrase one of Adams' most efficient means for drawing together diffuse information and syntax from his sources. It acts here as a logical bridge between Rodgers' sighting of the sail and his decision to pursue, and it reconstructs, for narrative purposes, the processes of thought that Rodgers may have experienced as he stood on deck. While Rodgers articulates his reasoning in stiffly formal prose written three months after the battle, Adams makes the reasoning seem to be part of the event itself. Furthermore, he rearranges the order of Rodgers' sentences so that the information about Diggio follows the setting of the scene and the approach of the ships, thereby increasing its narrative interest.

Yet however adroitly Adams reshapes Rodgers' letter to increase narrative coherence and tension, he does so with an argument in mind. Having decided that Rodgers' account contains the truth of the matter, he organizes his paraphrase to convince the reader that Rodgers was justified in mistaking an eighteen-gun sloop for a forty-gun frigate. His statement that "Rodgers reasoned that in all probability she was the

⁹ Adams, *History*, VI, 26 f.

¹⁰ John Rodgers to the American Court-Martial, September 12, 1811, *American State Papers: Class I (Foreign Relations)* (Washington, 1832), III, 496.

'Guerriere' " is the most important in the paragraph: it encourages the reader to accept Rodgers' point of view two pages before Adams admits that the British and American points of view disagree. Gleaning from the letter every piece of information that led Rodgers to view the *Little Belt* as he did, Adams sets it forth in a paragraph whose conclusion implies that Rodgers' "spirit" was not only "new" but bold and forthright. Carefully he edges his thumb onto Rodgers' side of the scale.

For his next paragraph Adams paraphrases what he judges to be the most important document to emerge from the battle, Rodgers' first official report to the Navy Department, written on board the *President* during the sail home and dated May 23, 1811. Again, Adams trims and reshapes Rodgers' language, improving its logic and style even while retaining its specialized vocabulary and precise detail; and of course he works into his narrative every statement in the document that supports Rodgers' argument.

Source:

At forty-five minutes past one, P.M., hoisted our ensign and pendant, when, finding her signals not answered, she wore and stood to the southward. Being desirous of speaking her, and of ascertaining what she was, I now made sail in chase, and by half-past three, P.M., found we were coming up with her, as, by this time, the upper part of her stern began to show itself above the horizon from our deck. The wind now began and continued gradually to decrease, so as to prevent my being able to approach her sufficiently before sunset, to discover her actual force, (which the position she preserved during the chase was calculated to conceal,) or to judge even to what nation she belonged, as she appeared studiously to decline showing her colors. At fifteen or twenty minutes past sev-

History:

Until quarter before two o'clock in the afternoon the ships stood toward each other. The stranger showed no colors, but made signals, until finding them unanswered, she changed her course and stood to the southward. Rodgers then made sail in chase, his colors and pennant flying. At half-past three, the stranger's hull began to be visible from the "President's" deck, but as the wind failed the American frigate gained less rapidly. In latitude 37° the sun, May 16, sets at seven o'clock, and dusk comes quickly on. At quarter-past seven the unknown ship again changed her course, and lay to, presenting her broadside to the "President," and showing colors, which in the gathering twilight were not clearly seen. The ship had the look of a frigate.¹¹

¹¹ Adams, *History*, VI, 27.

Source:

en, P.M., the chase took in her studing sails, and soon after hauled up her coursers, and hauled by the wind on the starboard tack; she, at the same time, hoisted an ensign or flag at her mizzen peak, but it was too dark for me to discover what nation it represented; now, for the first time, her broadside was presented to our view; but night had so far progressed, that although her appearance indicated she was a frigate, I was unable to determine her actual force.¹²

First, Adams' stylistic changes. Beginning the paragraph with a summary of the ships' movements before 1:45, for the rest of the paragraph he follows Rodgers' pattern of signaling each new block of action with an adverbial phrase denoting the time—"until quarter before two o'clock," "at half-past three," and so on. But in his second sentence he improves Rodgers' syntax by using "stranger" as his subject throughout, thus avoiding Rodgers' awkward shift from his own to the enemy's ship in mid-sentence; and he explains to the landsman what "wearing" means by changing Rodgers' "wore" to "she changed her course." These two changes typify a simple but characteristically important aspect of Adams' strategy in paraphrases throughout the *History*. He always strives, when recasting a document, for grammatical coherence and clarity; and he always tries to explain for the uninitiated reader's benefit as much of the special jargon of a profession as with tact he can. His treatment of the reader is, in this sense, extremely courteous: in virtually never "over-explaining" jargon he avoids patronizing his readers, yet in discreetly simplifying it from time to time he avoids frustrating them. His talent for judging what vocabulary will please and what will repel the general reader is remarkable; and of course no reader can criticize his effort to tighten and clarify a source writer's grammar. Though perhaps not striking in a single example, the double effort results in a great and commendable clarification of masses of specialized and often poorly written documents in the hundreds of paraphrases found throughout the *History*. For the middle part of the paraphrase, Adams consistently sharpens and tightens Rodgers' language; and in his sixth and seventh

¹² Rodgers to the Secretary of the Navy, May 23, 1811, *State Papers: Class I, III*, 497.

sentences he not only simplifies Rodgers' technical discussion of the *Little Belt's* maneuvers to "again changed her course, and lay to," but he also clarifies Rodgers' grammar in at least three ways—by making "the unknown ship" the subject of his sentence, by firmly subordinating all the secondary information he presents, and by casting the whole in the active voice. Finally, he heightens narrative interest by isolating Rodgers' "although her appearance indicated she was a frigate" in the brief, interesting, perhaps slightly melodramatic sentence, "The ship had the look of a frigate."

His argumentative strategy throughout the paraphrase is no less clear. Most of what he isolates from and adds to Rodgers' report serves to persuade us that Rodgers could not identify the *Little Belt*: his explicit statements that the "stranger showed no colors" and that Rodgers' "pennants and colors" were "flying," his evidence for the quickness of dusk at that date and latitude, his labeling the *Little Belt* the "stranger" and "unknown ship," and his concluding remark that the ship looked like a "frigate"—interestingly enough the first technical label he gives her—all these force us to view the *Little Belt* as Rodgers says he viewed her.

Adams narrates the battle itself, in his next three paragraphs, by piecing together in a number of brief paraphrases and summaries the testimony of the American crew and phrases and clauses from Rodgers' report. He uses no British documents. The second of these three paragraphs contains Adams' first open admission that the British and American reports substantially disagree; yet even while making the confession he implies that the narrative he has already set forth, despite its subtle argumentation in Rodgers' behalf, is simply a statement of fact: "To this point," he says, "the reports showed no great disagreement; but in regard to what followed, one story was told by Rodgers and all his ship's company, while a wholly different story was told by the British Captain and his officers." As far as the bare facts of the time and place of the preliminary maneuvers are concerned, what Adams says is true; yet the British and American documents disagree violently over Rodgers' estimate of the *Little Belt's* strength, the main point at issue. In the diplomatic notes and counter-notes provoked by the battle, the British minister is continually puzzled by Rodgers' inability to tell the difference between a sloop and a frigate:

That [Rodgers] could not discover at the distance of seventy or one hundred yards that the ship was a flushdeck sloop, though it was but a little after eight o'clock, on the 16th of May . . . must appear unaccountable to the comprehension of every unprejudiced person. . . .¹⁸

¹⁸ Augustus J. Foster to James Monroe, July 3, 1811, *State Papers: Class I*, III, 471.

- The point is hotly disputed in the documents; Adams eases the reader past it in the manner we have seen. However strongly we question the "objectivity" of his device, we must grant at least that it is skillfully executed, preparing the reader, as it does, to accept the American version well before he encounters the "diffuseness" of Adams' later analysis of the documents and moreover allowing him to enjoy a rousing narrative without interruption.

After the three paragraphs in which he gives the American version of the battle, Adams returns to Rodgers' letter of May 23 with a paraphrase that serves as a kind of denouement to the action and summary of the argument. The *Little Belt* has been virtually destroyed, with thirty-two of her crew killed and wounded, while the *President* has suffered minor injury to her rigging and one boy wounded:

Source:

... I hailed and again asked, 'What ship is that?' and learned, for the first time, that it was a ship of His Britannic Majesty.... I gave orders to . . . repair what little injury we had sustained in our rigging, &c. which was accordingly executed; and we continued lying to, on different tacks, with a number of lights displayed. . . . At daylight, . . . I gave orders to bear up and run down to him under easy sail; after hailing him, I sent a boat on board. . . . At nine, A.M., Lieutenant Creighton returned with information that it was His Britannic Majesty's ship the *Little Belt*. . . . P.S. The *Little Belt* is a corvette, about the size of the *John Adams*, but, owing to her great length, her having a poop and topgallants, forecastle, and room to mount three more guns of a side than she actually carries, her deep bulwark, and the manner of stowing her hammocks, she has the appearance

History:

Rodgers hailed once more, and understood the stranger to answer that she was a British ship-of-war in great distress. At nine o'clock at night the 'President' began to repair damages, and beat about within reach, on different tacks, with lights displayed, until daybreak, when she ran down to the British vessel, and sent a boat on board. Then at last Rodgers learned, certainly to his great disappointment, that he had been fighting a single-decked vessel of less than half his force. His mistake was not so surprising as it seemed. The British cruiser might easily at a distance, or in the dark, be taken for a frigate. Her great length; her poop, topgallants, forecastle; her deep bulwarks; the manner of stowing her hammocks; and room on each side to mount three more guns than she actually carried,—were decisive to any one who could not see that she carried but one tier of guns.¹⁴

¹⁴ Adams, *History*, VI, 29 f.

Source:

of a frigate, and would always be taken for such from the view we had of her during the chase, as we never had a sight of her broadside until it was too dark to ascertain that she only carried one tier of guns.¹⁵

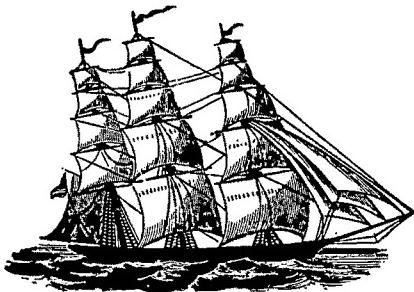
While Adams' treatment of Rodgers' prose in the first half of the paragraph, resembling that found in the passages already analyzed, need not detain us, his use of Rodgers' postscript in the second half deserves special note. Letting the passage take the tone of his own detached and presumably omniscient judgment, Adams blends it, a seemingly intractable piece of documentary evidence, without effort into the *History*, thereby completing his carefully wrought narrative of the battle even as he sets in place the keystone of his argument. Because Rodgers did not discover the *Little Belt's* real strength until the morning after the battle, so goes Rodgers' and Adams' argument, he was justified in demolishing her the night before. The whole episode funnels down to the kind of specific detail Adams here borrows from Rodgers concerning the *Little Belt*: the argument, organized to support Rodgers, builds to its greatest pressure; and the narrative, organized to reveal gradually the *Little Belt's* strength, logically ends. By following the chronology of Rodgers' successive states of revelation Adams is able to develop the action and his argument simultaneously and also to provide a coherent vantage point—Rodgers' range of vision—for the whole. Furthermore, he prepares the reader to discredit the British captain's report before he reads it and to applaud the contemptuous remark with which Adams introduces it in the paragraph immediately following the last one quoted above: "the rest of his story is to be told in his own words."¹⁶ And yet, in a sense, throughout the episode Adams fulfills Ranke's dictum that the documents be allowed to speak for themselves: while obviously manipulating them, he nevertheless keeps them always in sight beneath the pell-mell surface of his own prose.

The paraphrastic technique emerges from the *History* as a bold and original attempt to satisfy the demands of literary and historiographical art in the writing of "scientific" narrative history. Following Ranke's lead, Adams gives the documents a prominent place in the *History* not simply by quoting but also by paraphrasing them, and of course as he

¹⁵ Rodgers to the Secretary of the Navy, May 23, 1811, *State Papers: Class I, III*, 498.

¹⁶ Adams, *History*, VI, 30.

ought he discriminates continually between trustworthy and untrustworthy documents, paraphrasing at length only those, like Rodgers', that satisfy rigorous standards of reliability. In matters of style, Adams condenses, tightens and improves the language of his sources by trimming their excess verbiage, by drawing together their diffuse information in tightly-packed series, by carefully subordinating minor to major ideas, by replacing the passive with the active voice, by setting off in simple sentences clauses that need to stand alone, and by maintaining consistent subjects and predicates in his own complex sentences. Yet even while trimming and reorganizing his sources, he retains the vigor and sharpness of as much of their detail and specialized vocabulary as space and literary tact will allow. Most important, he points his paraphrases to coherent ends: as in his treatment of Rodgers' two letters, he almost always reworks his sources in such a way that they contribute to a consistent, organizing argument. Whatever his motive for paraphrasing a given document, he usually succeeds, as I have tried to indicate in his account of the *Little Belt* affair, in raising the technique to high art.



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Walt Whitman: Image and Credo

"TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER" IS A SHORT POEM WHICH FIRST APPEARED IN the "From Noon to Starry Night" section of *Leaves of Grass* in 1876.¹ Unlike many of Whitman's other poems it was never revised, nor has it received much critical attention. It is not even mentioned in the *Walt Whitman Handbook*.² Nevertheless, the poem is important to the student and critic of Whitman because it furnishes a useful exemplary image, a model, even, of Whitman's attempt to find an appropriate technological counterpart for the organic symbols he drew from nature, of his method of ordering the parts in a poem, of his choice of material in regard to its symbolic use, of his theories of verse and composition, and even of his relation to Emerson. This image is all the more important because it is of Whitman's own choosing.

The poem is divided into two parts of unequal length, which, however, are roughly parallel in structure:

PART I

1. Announcement of theme: "Thee for my recitative"
2. Descriptive catalogue in the manner of an ode which ends with evocation of locomotive as a symbol of the modern world: "Type of the modern"
3. Invocation of the locomotive to serve the poet in verse: "come serve the Muse and merge in verse"
4. Picture of locomotive in a natural setting: snow storm

PART II

1. Announcement of theme: "Fierce-throated beauty"
2. Short descriptive catalogue which ends with evocation of locomotive as a symbol of organic unity: "Law of thyself complete"
3. Parenthetical and negative invocation of locomotive as a model of verse: "No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine"
4. Picture of locomotive in a natural setting: "Launched o'er the prairies wide"

¹ "To a Locomotive in Winter," *Walt Whitman, Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. James E. Miller Jr. (Boston, 1959), p. 328.

² Gay Wilson Allen, *Walt Whitman Handbook* (Chicago, 1946).

This parallel structure, much freer in the poem than in the outline, is bound together by the musical theme which is consistent throughout the poem as we can see by noting the numerous rhythmical and musical terms: *recitative, beat, metrical, notes, chant, music, harp, piano, trills*. This musical motif, however, is not merely a structural device, but belongs to the essence of Whitman's statement.

"To a Locomotive in Winter" develops an analogy between the sounds and effects of the train and musical sounds; the poem also develops an analogy between Whitman's poetry and music. The train is musical ("all thy lawless music"), his own poetry is musical ("my recitative" and "my chant"), and therefore there is a musical connection between the train and his own poetry. In the second part of the poem, Whitman makes this analogy clear in the parenthetical statement "No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine," where, if the reader substitutes *mine* for *thine*, he gets an accurate picture of Whitman's own poetry. In *Walt Whitman and Opera*, Robert D. Faner says:

Whitman repeatedly emphasized the fact that . . . [his poems] . . . were to escape the dulcet rhymes and pretty effects. He wanted power, crude and violent, perhaps, but irresistible. "To a Locomotive in Winter" is a good example of such poems. Here he calls upon the roaring engine to serve him as a model. . . .³

The poem, of course, is based on operatic forms with the first part resembling a recitative and the second part imitating a more lyric song or aria. (We have already noticed the words *recitative* and *chant* in the poem itself.) Thus the poem is an example of the operatic effect Whitman was seeking in much of his poetry; but the locomotive itself is really a two-fold symbol in that it is first of all a "Type of the modern" and then a counterpart of Whitman's "operatic" poetry itself.

The conception of the locomotive as an emblem of the modern world is not original, of course, with Whitman. Many of the writers of his era were impressed with the railroad and the possibilities of travel it offered; many even used it as a "Type of the modern." Emerson in his journal, for example, described the railroad both as a means and a sign of America's inevitable westward expansion as well as a "work of art which agitates and drives mad the whole people; as music, sculpture, and pictures have done on their great days respectively."⁴ Both Thoreau and Hawthorne saw the locomotive as a symbol of what was wrong with con-

³ Robert D. Faner, *Walt Whitman and Opera* (Philadelphia, 1951), p. 97.

⁴ *Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, eds. E. W. Emerson and W. E. Forbes (Boston, 1909-14), VII, 504.

temporary American life.⁵ Hawthorne's short story "The Celestial Railroad" ironically shows the railroad as a modern equivalent of Dante's "cammin di nostra vita" or that path which Christian followed in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Hawthorne's allegory, however, is satirical, showing that by means of the railroad, and all the modern contrivances it stands for, man can now travel the road to damnation even faster than his ancestors. If the railroad is a "Type of the modern" for Hawthorne, then he seems to be ridiculing the fact that spiritual progress has not kept up with technological progress—one of the most important themes in our literature. But because Hawthorne's technique in the story is more like Bunyan's than Dante's, and because he is so intent on what the Celestial Railroad means, Hawthorne neglects to see what the earthly railroad looks like. Hence we are left with a shadowy literal object that fails to bear the heavy burden of allegorical meaning. Thoreau, like Hawthorne, envisioned a "celestial train," and in Thoreau's writings the earthly railroad is often ignored or subordinated to the possible meaning of its heavenly or mythological counterpart.

In contrast to Hawthorne's "Celestial Omnibus," Thoreau's poem "What's the Railroad to Me?" does not even present the railroad as a symbolic embodiment of the "pulse of the continent." If in Hawthorne's story you can't get to heaven in a railroad car, in Thoreau's poem you don't even know railroads are useful:

What's the railroad to me?
 I never go to see
 Where it ends.
 It fills a few hollows,
 And makes banks for swallows,
 It sets the sand a-blowing,
 And the blackberries a-growing.⁶

As this poem shows, Thoreau could coyly ignore the power and utility of the railroad; but at his best, that is, in his prose and when he dropped this pseudo-romantic pose, Thoreau seized upon the railroad as an important creation of modern life and mythology. This apparent contrast between his attitudes is manifested in the same chapter of *Walden* which contains "What's the Railroad to Me?"

In the chapter of *Walden* entitled "Sounds" Thoreau admitted that the railroad could not be ignored: "the whistle of the locomotive pene-

⁵ For a detailed study of Emerson, Hawthorne and Thoreau's thought and writing on the railroad see G. Ferris Cronkhite, "The Transcendental Railroad," *The New England Quarterly*, XXIV (September 1951), 306-28.

⁶ Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York, 1942), p. 86.

brates my woods summer and winter, sounding like the scream of a hawk sailing over some farmer's yard. . . ." ⁷ To Thoreau, as later to Whitman, the railroad was a man-made organism analogous to a creation of nature ("sounding like the scream of a hawk"); the railroad was literally an iron horse. Potentially like the highest order of creation, the railroad was sadly deficient because of man's concern with unheroic, ignoble, even malevolent motives and deeds:

When I meet the engine with its train of cars moving off with planetary motion,—or, rather like a comet, for the beholder knows not if with that velocity and with that direction it will ever revisit this system, since its orbit does not look like a returning curve,—with its steam cloud like a banner streaming behind in golden and silver wreaths, like many a downy cloud which I have seen high in the heavens, unfolding its masses to the light,—as if this travelling demigod, this cloud-compeller, would ere long take the sunset sky for the livery of his train; when I hear the iron horse make the hills echo with his snort like thunder, shaking the earth with his feet, and breathing fire and smoke from his nostrils (what kind of winged horse or fiery dragon they will put into the new Mythology I don't know), it seems as if the earth had got a race now worthy to inhabit it. If were all as it seems, and men made the elements their servants for noble ends! If the cloud that hangs over the engine were the perspiration of heroic deeds, or as beneficent as that which floats over the farmer's fields, then the elements and Nature herself would cheerfully accompany men on their errands and be their escort.⁸

Examining Thoreau's writing, then, we see that his basic attitude toward the railroad is more consistent with Hawthorne's allegory, than it is either with Emerson's journal entry or with Whitman's ode:

I watch the passage of the morning cars with the same feeling that I do the rising of the sun, which is hardly more regular. Their train of clouds stretching far behind and rising higher and higher, going to heaven while the cars are going to Boston, conceals the sun for a minute and casts my distant field into the shade, a celestial train beside which the petty train of cars which hugs the earth is but the barb of the spear.⁹

Emerson, therefore, pointed to the railroad as the latest link in the chain of historic and artistic development, while Thoreau and Hawthorne envisioned the railroad as a fitting if unfortunate sign of the times; but it was Whitman who finally transformed these attitudes into a significant, affirmative poem.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

Like Hawthorne and Thoreau, Whitman was impressed by the railroad, and he traveled by train as early as 1846:

Like most Americans, Whitman marveled at the mechanical achievement that enabled him to take 'a flying picnic' a hundred miles away and return the same day.¹⁰

Also like Hawthorne and Thoreau, Whitman had used the engine as a pessimistic symbol of our culture. We read in *The Solitary Singer*:

That Whitman was already groping toward his own theory of art, in 1851, is shown in a lecture he gave before the Brooklyn Art Union on March 31. He felt himself and his artist associates to be aligned with idealists against the materialists. Some years later he would write a poem on the beauty of a locomotive, but on this occasion it was not with approval that he called the United States a 'nation of whom the steam engine is no bad symbol.' Therefore, 'To the artist; I say, has been given the command to go forth into all the world and preach the gospel of beauty.'¹¹

But Whitman did not stay "aligned with the idealists against the materialists" until he wrote "To a Locomotive in Winter." In "Passage to India" for example, he used the Pacific railroad as a sign of the world's manifest destiny much as Emerson had done before him:

Lo, soul, seest thou not God's purpose from the first?
The earth to be spann'd, connected by network,
The races, neighbors, to marry and be given in marriage,
The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near,
The lands to be welded together.¹²

Even before "Passage to India," however, Whitman had begun to use the locomotive symbolically.

Whitman slowly developed the locomotive as an available symbol in his poetry in the course of writing several poems.¹³ Trains occur in the

¹⁰ Gay Wilson Allen, *The Solitary Singer* (New York, 1955), p. 77.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110. For the original speech see "Art and Artists" in *The Uncollected Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*, ed. Emory Holloway (Garden City and Toronto, 1921), I, 241-47. On page 241 we read: "Among such a people as the Americans, viewing most things with an eye to pecuniary profit—more for acquiring than for enjoying or well developing what they acquire—ambitious of the physical rather than the intellectual; a race to whom matter of fact is everything, and the ideal nothing—a nation of whom the steam engine is no bad symbol. . . ."

¹² *Complete Poetry*, p. 288.

¹³ In much of the following paragraph I am indebted to my colleague Bert C. Bach. Mr. Bach kindly let me read and use material from his unpublished MS entitled "The Locomotive as Symbol in Walt Whitman's Poetry."

poems subsequently called "Song of Myself" and "A Song for Occupations" as early as the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*. In both poems Whitman used trains as sources for visual and auditory images. By 1856 in "Salut au Monde" Whitman had already seized upon the railroad as a unifying force in the world:

I see the tracks of the railroads of the earth,
I see them in Great Britain, I see them in Europe,
I see them in Asia and in Africa.¹⁴

When in the 1860 edition of *Leaves of Grass* Whitman considered suitable subjects for the bard, he mentioned "the strong and quick locomotive" in "Proto-Leaf";¹⁵ and in "Chants Democratic 3" he catalogued the parts of the engine in a way that looks forward to "To a Locomotive in Winter":

The steam-engine, lever, crank, axle, piston, shaft, air-pump, boiler, beam, pulley, hinge, flange, band, bolt, throttle, governors, up and down rods. . . .¹⁶

Whitman also stressed the importance of the railroad system as an arterial network which unites and supplies sustenance to all men in "Chants Democratic 1,"¹⁷ while he expressed his envious sense of the engineer's pleasure in "Poem of Joys":

O the engineer's joys!
To go with a locomotive!
To hear the hiss of steam—the merry shriek—the steam-whistle—
the laughing locomotive!
To push with resistless way, and speed off in the distance.¹⁸

Whitman's joy is so obvious in this last poem, one wonders why he developed the locomotive as a symbol so slowly. In order to answer this question we must turn to an article by G. Ferris Cronkhite.

In "Walt Whitman and the Locomotive,"¹⁹ Mr. Cronkhite suggests three reasons why Whitman may have hesitated to transform one of his frequent visual and auditory images, the locomotive, into a significant symbol. First of all, Mr. Cronkhite notes, the locomotives of the 1850s,

¹⁴ *Complete Poetry*, p. 102.

¹⁵ Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1961), p. 20.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

¹⁹ G. Ferris Cronkhite, "Walt Whitman and the Locomotive," *American Quarterly*, V (Summer 1954), 164-72.

many of them built in the 1830s and 1840s, were graceless and insignificant in comparison with the engines of the 1860s. Secondly, it was not until the 1870s that Whitman could have seen an impressive railroad network uniting the nation since it was not until 1869 that the transcontinental railroad was completed. Thirdly, it was not until 1873 that Whitman lived near the railroad tracks and paid careful attention to the trains daily. We read in one of Whitman's letters from this period:

The trains of the Camden and Amboy are going by on the track about 50 or 60 rods from here, puffing and blowing—often train after train, following each other—and locomotives singly, whistling and squealing, up and down again—I often sit here and watch them long. . . .²⁰

To Whitman the bard, the huffing engines must have seemed particularly important signs of man's progress and never-ending quest; to Whitman the paralyzed old man, the trains must have seemed ironclad embodiments of his own desire to be on the road again. And as Mr. Cronkhite suggests, in "To a Locomotive in Winter" "It is Whitman's emotional identification with the locomotive . . . which is the real source of the poem's exhilaration."²¹ So we may suggest that not until Whitman inspirited the locomotive with both the breath of his bardic power and the fire of his own feelings could the train move with more than the energy of an industrial allegory. It is this personal identification with the engine which separates Whitman's locomotive from Emerson's and Thoreau's and Hawthorne's, which makes Whitman's locomotive of lasting poetic interest.

It is not surprising then that by 1876 Whitman used the locomotive in an affirmative way, indicating his concern with the modern, the industrial and the national elements of the world in which he found himself. What is new, though, is his use of the locomotive as a symbol for his own poetry.

In one of the few articles written about "To a Locomotive in Winter," George Arms notes:

In the second stanza the attributes of the locomotive are clearly those of Whitman's poetry: 'Lawless' (19), 'law of thyself' (21), 'trills of shrieks' (23; cf. 'barbaric yawp'). A negative attribute is one elsewhere applied by Whitman to conventional poets: 'No sweetness debonair . . . of glib piano.'²²

²⁰ Walt Whitman, *Calamus—Letters by Walt Whitman to a Young Friend* (Boston, 1897), p. 141.

²¹ Cronkhite, "Walt Whitman and the Locomotive," p. 172.

²² George Arms, "To a Locomotive in Winter," *Explicator*, V, Note 46, 14.

A little further on, Mr. Arms also notes that the side bars of the train symbolize Whitman's frequent use of parallelisms, and he ingeniously indicates that the "train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following" symbolizes Whitman's catalogue technique. It seems to me that Mr. Arms has hit upon the most significant aspect of the poem for the student of Whitman. Once we realize the point Mr. Arms is making, we also see that the locomotive is a fitting symbol for Whitman's organic theory of poetry:

The rhyme and uniformity of perfect poems show the free growth of metrical laws and bud from them as unerringly and loosely as lilacs or roses on a bush, and take shapes of chestnuts and oranges and melons and pears, and shed the perfume impalpable to form.²³

The things Whitman chose to list in his catalogue are chiefly the musical and organic elements of the locomotive, the elements that serve to pull the engine into a unity and cause it to act in a rhythmical, organic way: the *connecting rods*, the *knitted* frame, the *metrical* swelling and tapering of the roar. Thus we see that Whitman's poem is a positive symbol of his America ("Type of the modern") and of his own poetry both as he wrote it and as he theorized about it ("Law of thyself complete"), but we still have to note at least one more way in which the poem can help us to form and keep in mind an accurate picture of Whitman.

Even the now legendary relationship of Emerson and Whitman and the actual poetic influence that Emerson had on Whitman is reflected in "To a Locomotive in Winter." First of all we may note that the organic theory of poetry formulated by Whitman and embodied in "To a Locomotive in Winter" resembles Emerson's statement in his essay "The Poet":

For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument that makes a poem —a thought so passionate and alive that like the spirit of a plant or an animal it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing.²⁴

Emerson also expressed this idea in his poems, and Whitman seems to have had one of these poems, "Merlin," in mind when he wrote "To a Locomotive in Winter." Whitman says "No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine" and thus shows how even in its negative characteristics the locomotive symbolizes his own poetry. This line of Whitman's recalls a passage in Emerson's "Merlin":

²³ *Complete Poetry*, p. 415.

²⁴ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet," *The Complete Essays and Other Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, ed. Tremaine McDowell (New York, 1950), p. 323.

The trivial harp will never please
 Or fill my craving ear;
 Its chords should ring as blows the breeze,
 Free, peremptory, clear.
 No jingling serenader's art,
 Nor tinkle of piano strings,
 Can make the wild blood start
 In its mystic springs.²⁵

The coincidence of the harp and piano (as well as the *naturalness* of the breeze) used in the same way that Whitman used them is striking enough, but the sense of the passage is further applicable to Whitman. Reading on, we find

The kingly bard
 Must smite the chords rudely and hard,

which brings to mind Whitman's symbolic train with its tremendous power that he invokes as a model for his verse. Also in its emphasis on unpretentious, perhaps not overly delicate expression, the Emerson poem helps us to see that "The dense and murky clouds out-belching from the smoke stack" is directly analogous to Whitman pouring forth his verse as metaphorically phrased in "Song of Myself": "The sound of the belch'd words of my voice loos'd to the eddies of the wind."²⁶ When Emerson speaks of the poet utilizing "the din of city arts" we recall once more Whitman's train, which is the product and the symbol of the city's industrial arts. Finally, when Emerson writes

Great is the art,
 Great be the manners of the bard.
 He shall not his brain encumber
 With the coil of rhythm and number;
 But, leaving rule and pale forethought
 He shall aye climb for his rhyme,

we recall the metrical pant and roar of the locomotive "with all its lawless music . . . Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding." So looking ahead from Emerson to Whitman, we can see how "To a Locomotive in Winter" really embodied the fulfillment of Emerson's demand for a national bard as well as it symbolized the relationship between the two poets.

²⁵ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Merlin," *Poetry of the New England Renaissance*, ed. George F. Whicher (New York, 1960), pp. 71-72.

²⁶ *Complete Poetry*, p. 25.

On the other hand, if we take the opportunity of looking back at Whitman from our own time, we have the chance to see another creative critic choose, from all the images available to him with which to characterize Whitman, exactly the one image which I have been suggesting as particularly appropriate—the engine, and specifically the locomotive. In his essay on Whitman, D. H. Lawrence says:

I AM HE THAT ACHE WITH AMOROUS LOVE.

CHUFF! CHUFF! CHUFF!

CHU-CHU-CHU-CHU-CHUFF!

Reminds me of a steam engine. A locomotive.

They're the only things that seem to me to ache with amorous love.

All that steam inside them. Forty million foot-pounds pressure.

The ache of AMOROUS LOVE. Steam-pressure.

CHUFF!²⁷

Lawrence is satirizing Whitman here, but at the same time he shows that Whitman's attempt to rid his poetry of tinkling, glib sounds has been successful. Later in the same essay, Lawrence sums up Whitman's poetry in a single image, and once again it is the image of an engine:

He was everything and everything was in him. He drove an automobile with a very fierce headlight, along the track of a fixed idea, through the darkness of this world. And he saw everything that way . . . Walt . . . in his great fierce poetic machine.²⁸

Lawrence says automobile, says it more than once; but I think he really had a locomotive in mind, for it is a locomotive and not an automobile which rides along a track with a single fierce headlight, and it is a locomotive rather than automobile which is a great, fierce machine. At any rate, I believe Lawrence has seen into the heart of Whitman's poetry with an instinct peculiar to the artist-critic and has come up with the same symbol that Whitman once chose to represent both his country and his poetry. Lawrence's choosing the engine as a symbol of Whitman's poetry may, at first, seem strange because the natural images of trees and plants have been most often associated with the poet's work. However, Lawrence chose to emphasize a seemingly less typical but actually more original and idiosyncratic aspect of Whitman's poetry, and how typical of Lawrence the emphasis is! After all, Whitman's use of the organic in nature, his leaves of grass for example, is nothing new to the reader of Coleridge, Keats or even Emerson, as we have already seen; but Whit-

²⁷ D. H. Lawrence, "Whitman," *Studies in Classic American Literature* (New York, 1953), pp. 175-76.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 179.

man's successful incorporation of the technological within the framework of the organic and therefore within the boundaries of beauty is an achievement which does not look back to Coleridge and Emerson's critical notions so much as it looks forward to the poetic accomplishment of Hart Crane in "The Bridge." Nor is Lawrence's choice of the engine as a symbol for Whitman's poetry an erratic intuition supported only by the one poem "To a Locomotive in Winter."

Since Whitman had found such a fine expression of his America, of his poetry and even of his personal feelings, it is too bad he did not write a better poem. Even recognizing its usefulness, one must admit that "To a Locomotive in Winter" falters, for instance in its dull recitative section. And when he gets to the middle of that section, Whitman destroys his effect with a glaring departure from his serious tone:

. . . the tremulous twinkle of thy wheels

Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following.

This description is reminiscent of his description of a train in "Poem of Joys," but merry railroad cars and twinkling wheels, no matter how tremulous, are more appropriate to a Walt Disney cartoon than to this poem which seeks to define a serious poetic symbol. Whitman has taken his eye from the train, and intellectually looking down from above, as an adult looks down on a child's electric train, he has momentarily seen the huge cars as obedient and merry followers of his symbolic locomotive. This unfortunate line is more in keeping with the tone of Emily Dickinson's cloyingly pleasant poem "I love to see it lap the miles."

But the second part of Whitman's poem is more consistently successful. From the very first line ("Fierce-throated beauty!") the train gains strength and moves under its own power until in the last lines it is beyond Whitman, driving through the hills and prairies of the real world. When the train in the poem becomes real, then Whitman's symbol becomes most meaningful. Surely, as the train outstripped the traditional modes of transportation and extended the frontiers of American civilization, so Whitman's own poetry passed beyond the conventional harp and piano, following its own law on its own track. What we have, then, in the poem, is both an image and a credo.



TO A LOCOMOTIVE IN WINTER

Thee for my recitative,

Thee in the driving storm even as now, the snow, the winter day
declining,

Thee in thy panoply, thy measur'd dual throbbing and thy beat
convulsive,

Thy black cylindric body, golden brass and silvery steel,

Thy ponderous side-bars, parallel and connecting rods, gyrating, 5
shuttling at thy sides,

Thy metrical, now swelling pant and roar, now tapering in the
distance,

Thy great protruding head-light fix'd in front,

Thy long, pale, floating vapor-pennants, tinged with delicate purple,
The dense and murky clouds out-belching from thy smoke-stack,

Thy knitted frame, thy springs and valves, the tremulous twinkle 10
of thy wheels,

Thy train of cars behind, obedient, merrily following,

Through gale or calm, now swift, now slack, yet steadily careering;
Type of the modern—emblem of motion and power—pulse of the
continent,

For once come serve the Muse and merge in verse, even as here I
see thee,

With storm and buffeting gusts of wind and falling snow, 15

By day thy warning ringing bell to sound its notes,

By night thy silent signal lamps to swing.

Fierce-throated beauty!

Roll through my chant with all thy lawless music, thy swinging
lamps at night,

Thy madly-whistled laughter, echoing, rumbling like an earthquake, 20
rousing all,

Law of thyself complete, thine own track firmly holding,

(No sweetness debonair of tearful harp or glib piano thine,)

Thy trills of shrieks by rocks and hills return'd,

Launch'd o'er the prairies wide, across the lakes,

To the free skies unpent and glad and strong. 25

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Localism and State Control in Horace Mann's Reform of the Common Schools

IT IS GENERALLY AGREED THAT WITHIN THE COMMON SCHOOL REFORM MOVEMENT the accomplishments of Horace Mann were the most dramatic and far-reaching. As a result, any detailed study of the growth of American public education must consider his role in this development. Unfortunately, upon coming to the subject, the historian is handicapped by a dearth of research in the midst of ample sources. In place of depth and breadth, he finds repetition; the oft-repeated descriptions by Mann's contemporaries of his selfless dedication and service to the next generation. Later when the nation established a system of schools which resembled that advocated by Mann, the legend of heroism was transformed into prophetic vision.

By and large, historians have accepted the interpretation of Ellwood P. Cubberley, who assigned Mann a significant role in the reform of the common schools. Among the sources from which Cubberley drew his conclusions were James G. Carter's writings of the 1820s, warning that the rise of private academies would produce a dangerous social cleavage.¹ Carter's jeremiad was one of the earliest of a number which seemed to fall on deaf ears. When much actually was accomplished after Mann took office in 1837, some of his contemporaries claimed that the improvement was his individual accomplishment. George B. Emerson, one of Mann's closest associates and an eyewitness to many of the campaigns, gave such an evaluation ten years after Mann's death. The creation of academies by private individuals and groups actually had courted social

¹ *Letters to the Hon. William Prescott on the Free Schools of New England with Remarks on the Principles of Instruction* (Boston, 1824).

fragmentation, he reasoned, but the efforts of public spirited persons such as Mann had met the attack with effective state action.² The theme was given additional support by others, including Henry Barnard, a reformer in his own right.³ Thus, in assessing the common school reform, Cubberley, and those after him, could draw on a body of information which assumed Mann's pivotal role in the development of public education.

Generally speaking, this interpretation has survived intact, although Mann's idealism appeared to have lost some of its luster in the 1930s as historians traced a connection between the self-interest of propertied classes and their concern for the improvement of the schools. Chief among these was Merle Curti, who argued cogently that while Mann recognized the increase of crime, ignorance, poverty and intemperance as the unpleasant concomitants of a capitalistic society, he advocated an educational program which supported the *status quo*. "It was as if Mann," Curti concluded, "were unconsciously trying to tell the dominant class what must be done to make its position more advantageous and secure."⁴

More recently Rush Welter has contended that while some did support public education as a means of securing their property, a wave of popular opinion in favor of schools far outdistanced this conservative doctrine. Democrats, unwilling that vast numbers of children be condemned to the stigma of pauper education, demanded a broadly based system of free education supported by public taxation and available to all. Although Mann never claimed that some were poor because others were rich, he was caught up in this movement, and by the end of his career, Welter argues, "he accepted virtually the same diagnosis of contemporary social evils that workingmen had first voiced, and he proposed virtually the same cure."⁵

These opposing points of view are understandable since Mann's own writings on the subject are ambiguous. At times he described education as the foremost ally of the propertied classes. On other occasions he spoke and wrote as if he were of the Jacksonian persuasion. If the charge of economic self-interest suggests a downward re-assessment of his contribution to education, surely the accusation of ambiguity or hypocrisy is even more damaging to his reputation as reformer. It is my opinion, however, that Mann did follow a consistent policy which can best be understood by comparing his earlier efforts in politics and humanitarian reforms to the educational work which followed.

² *Education in Massachusetts: Early Legislation and History* (Boston, 1869).

³ *American Educational Biography* (Syracuse, n.d.), pp. 365-404.

⁴ *The Social Ideas of American Educators* (Paterson, N. J., 1959), p. 131.

⁵ *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (New York, 1962), p. 100.

The decade before 1837 was a period in which the zeal for humanitarian endeavors had grown white hot, expressing itself in a variety of forms, some familiar to us through Emerson's vivid description of the New England reformers. Within this variety, however, was a common faith in progress and a belief in the power of the individual to improve his lot if society would remove certain obstacles and render occasional assistance. It was during these ten years that Mann rose from being a relatively obscure attorney in Dedham to become the President of the Massachusetts Senate. In both chambers of the General Court, he had immersed himself in railroad promotion, the Charles River Bridge controversy, the construction of the first state hospital for the treatment of the insane in America, the defense of religious freedom; he had even authored a series of laws to promote temperance. Although consistent loyalty to a party platform or political doctrine was rare at the time, Mann's position in all of these was conditioned by his interpretation of social changes about him, an interpretation he was able to use in the common school reform with only minor accommodations.

If anything, his childhood in the relatively static and self-contained community of Franklin, Massachusetts, made him all the more sensitive to the rapid economic growth he found in Dedham and Boston. While he welcomed the progress being achieved in transportation and industry, he also noted that not all were sharing in the benefits that should have accrued from this advance, as evidenced by what he thought was an ominous increase in the number of paupers, drunkards and criminals. Some argued that these people could only rehabilitate themselves through an act of will power and self-help. Others, including Mann, invoked an equally fundamental New England tradition that the local community was responsible for helping its less fortunate citizens. While still in the legislature, he did not understand that industrial and commercial progress was creating new problems which were beyond the scope of older communal, religious and familial forms of law and order. Thus, rather than denouncing the rise of technology as a harbinger of social evils, he directed his attention to devising legal means by which the superior power of the state could supplant the apparent abdication of traditional responsibilities by smaller units of authority within the Commonwealth.

Two episodes from his political career illustrate his awareness of this abdication and the remedy he proposed. One of Mann's first interests on coming into the General Court was the promotion of railroads. In several carefully prepared speeches before the House he argued that the future of Massachusetts depended more upon its emerging industry than upon its farms, and that in the final analysis, both were dependent upon an improved system of transportation, one which was statewide and free

from the petty jealousies of competing towns. As waterways from New York, Providence and New Haven began to tap the Massachusetts hinterland, it was clear that the internal commerce which Boston had always considered as its private domain was now in danger. For him, the obvious answer was railroad construction, even though attempts to organize a system would be frustrated by factors more formidable than the Berkshires. Seaports such as Salem and Newburyport were unwilling to acknowledge Boston's plight, and inland towns felt no need to be rescued from the commercial encroachments of other states. Even those communities which were willing to back the building of roads offered their support only if the projected trackage would terminate in their particular town. Against such feudalism, Mann actively supported railroad legislation which he thought would be for the good of the entire Commonwealth.⁶

While President of the Massachusetts Senate in 1836 and 1837, he cast the crucial vote in a number of controversies which inadvertently were instrumental in defining the public and private responsibility of railroads. As the cost of establishing roads had exceeded the estimates of the planners, additional financing became mandatory. Earlier attempts to obtain adequate sums had faltered because of sectional rivalries. Thus the original backers had increasingly turned to private sources of capital with the promise that investors would receive generous profits. Mann at the time did not foresee that the private function of the corporation would increase. In his own mind, the resort to private investment was a temporary legal accommodation. Within twenty years, he assumed the state would take complete title to the railroads.⁷

⁶ Two manuscripts of Mann's speeches supporting railroad construction are found in the Mann Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, hereafter MHS. One is entitled "Argument for a Western Railroad," (1833). The other has no title or date but was probably given early in 1831. For newspaper accounts of Mann's speeches, see the *Village Register* (Dedham), March 20, 1828; *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, January 30, 1830 and January 26, 1831; *Columbian Centinel*, January 27 and 30, and February 3, 1830. For voting record in the House and his service on committees dealing with railroad legislation, see Journal of the House, Vol. 48, June 13, 1827, vote tally sheet; Vol. 50, January 30, 1830, p. 229 and vote tally sheet; Vol. 51, January 15, 1831, p. 150, manuscript in Massachusetts State Archives, hereafter MSA.

⁷ In their attempt to attract additional capital, the directors of such roads as the Boston and Lowell faced a dilemma. Only by convincing the legislature that they were to serve a public purpose could they claim the right to issue new stocks. Only by making profit an incentive, however, could they attract private investors. That the temporary might become permanent was a development that Mann did not anticipate. See my "Horace Mann: The Early Years, 1796-1837" (Doctor's dissertation, Harvard University, 1963), pp. 433-38. For a general discussion of the changing role of the corporation in Massachusetts, see Oscar and Mary Flug Handlin, *Commonwealth: A Study of the Role of Government in the American Economy: Massachusetts, 1774-1861*

A similar concern for state action prompted his work in an apparently unrelated endeavor—the building of a hospital for the treatment of the insane. From the very beginnings of the colony, it had been assumed that the towns chartered by the General Court would be responsible for the care of their dependent citizens, particularly those who could not support themselves because of ill health or poverty. As a result of Indian attacks and natural disasters such as floods and fires, it had become necessary for the General Court to recognize a second class of dependents or refugees who no longer were the responsibility of a specific town. The number looking to the state for support continued to grow, not only because of negligent town authorities, but because of relaxed immigration policies and the increased mobility of wage earners in search of factory work. By the 1820s, both those public dependents, especially paupers and lunatics who had a clear claim on the town through residence, and those stranded in a locality by circumstances beyond their control, were being ignored. It was in reaction to a series of shocking reports on their pathetic condition that Horace Mann led a battle in the legislature for funds to establish a state hospital for the insane, a project which he promoted successfully through the House and Senate. Moreover, he directed construction of its buildings, organized its staff, and wrote some of its early annual reports. Here with lunatics, as with railroads, he invoked the superior resources and power of the state to deal with a problem he considered beyond individual town action.⁸

These two examples illustrated a concern which found expression in other legislative efforts. In the Charles River Bridge controversy, he went out of his way to argue that the state had the authority to withdraw what it had previously granted to a public or private corporation.⁹ In a defense of religious freedom, he reasoned that chartered funds support-

(New York, 1947), pp. 115-49 and 172-73. A similar study of the development in Pennsylvania is Louis Hartz, *Economic Policy and Democratic Thought: Pennsylvania, 1776-1860* (Cambridge, 1948).

⁸ For a description of the towns' neglect of lunatics, see *Massachusetts House Documents, 1827-1828*, No. 50, "Report," February 16, 1827, p. 2 and *Second Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Prison Discipline Society, June 1, 1827* (Boston, 1827). For information on Mann's work promoting the hospital, see *Massachusetts House Documents, 1830-1831*, No. 39, "Report," pp. 1-4; *Independent Chronicle and Boston Patriot*, February 17, 1830; *Reports and Other Documents Relating to the State Lunatic Hospital at Worcester, Massachusetts* (Boston, 1837). The meticulous interest Mann took in the actual construction of the building is documented in the correspondence of the hospital commissioners in the Mann Papers, MHS, between August 21, 1830 and October 29, 1832. Some of the problems of getting the hospital into operation are discussed in Samuel B. Woodward to Horace Mann, March 11 and 22, 1833 and April 1 and 16, 1833, Woodward Papers, American Antiquarian Society, hereafter AAS.

⁹ *Journal of the House*, Vol. 48, March 11, 1828, pp. 432-36, manuscript in MSA; *Columbian Sentinel*, March 15, 1828.

ing religious societies were subject to alteration at the pleasure of the legislature.¹⁰ As the chief spokesman for a series of laws regulating the sale of alcoholic beverages, he insisted that the rise of intemperance was related to the failure of town authorities to do their duty.¹¹ On a more humanitarian level, he used his position to get adequate state support for the Perkins Institution where Samuel Gridley Howe and his staff were offering care and training to blind children; care which was far beyond the ability of a family or community.¹²

It is understandable then that when Mann first gave serious thought to education, he saw it chiefly as the problem of reactivating a sense of civic and individual duty through increased effort by the state. Prior to 1837, he had not taken an active interest in the schools, having passed up appointments on the Education Committees in the House and Senate for the more influential Judiciary Committees.¹³ Moreover, he had not been active in any of the voluntary organizations attempting to improve the schools. While some of his closest friends were involved in the American Institute of Instruction, Mann's name was not to be found on its roster until after he became Secretary to the Board of Education.¹⁴ He did give one speech to a group of teachers in 1832, but it in no way anticipated his later efforts. In it, Mann expressed some pious generalities about the high calling of teachers and the importance of moral education for the coming generation.¹⁵

¹⁰ For background information on this episode in Mann's career in the legislature, see Senate Document No. 8109, "Petition of the First Religious Society of Blandford," May 22, 1824, manuscript in MSA; *Christian Register*, March 22, 1828 and *Columbian Centinel*, February 23, 1828. The apparent copy of Mann's remarks defending religious freedom is found on the back of an undated letter from Silas Holbrook to Horace Mann, Mann Papers, MHS.

¹¹ The material describing Mann's efforts for more rigorous temperance laws is voluminous. For a general description of his work see my "Horace Mann: The Early Years, 1796-1837," pp. 230-58, 387-95, 447-49 and 479-86.

¹² Quarterly Report to the Trustees (of the New England Institution for the Education of the Blind), 1832-1837, manuscript in the Perkins School for the Blind, Watertown, Mass.; *Massachusetts House Documents*, 1833, No. 22, "Memorial"; Elizabeth Palmer Peabody to Julia Ward Howe, February 9, 1876, Howe Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹³ It was necessary for two prominent educational reformers to explain to Mann what voluntary groups had been doing to improve the quality of education in Massachusetts. See James G. Carter to Horace Mann, June 21, 1837, Mann Papers, MHS, and Charles Brooks, *History of the Introduction of State Normal Schools in America*. (Boston, 1864), p. 11.

¹⁴ Mann was not listed as a member, officer nor participant in any of the years from 1830 to 1836. See *The Lectures Delivered before the American Institute of Instruction Including the Journal of Proceedings* (Boston, 1830-36).

¹⁵ Horace Mann, Address to the Norfolk Association of Teachers at Dedham, February (25), 1832, manuscript in Mann Papers, MHS.

In 1834, the General Court had established a school fund from half of the compensation Massachusetts was to receive for the services of her militia in the War of 1812.¹⁶ Rather than supplement what they had been raising, more than a few of the towns assumed the new income could supplant some of their tax assessments for the schools. This was galling enough to friends of the common schools, but it was doubly bitter when a group of legislators attempted to push through a further modification which simply required the towns to use the proceeds for public expenditures. Not only did this release communities from the requirement of a minimum support for the schools, but it also permitted the local authorities to use the income for general municipal expenses.¹⁷

It was against such a move that Horace Mann made his first speech on education in the General Court. In it, he expressed a concern with the general decline of local responsibility for the schools and the need for concerted state action.¹⁸ His plea against the unrestricted disposal of the school fund, however, went unheeded; in fact, it was merely a side issue. Most of the discussion ignored his argument completely and concerned itself with choosing which census should be used for the distribution.¹⁹

This experience in the legislature not only helped convince him to accept the offer to become the Secretary of the Board of Education, but it also sharpened a point of view which he would apply subsequently in the reform of the common schools. At the time, others had concentrated their efforts in voluntary organizations, promoting the Sunday School movement, temperance reform, and anti-slavery work. Although confident of their goals, these groups were often unsure about their methods. At the outset each movement had expected to achieve its aims through persuasion without governmental support. Gradually, as their objectives

¹⁶ *Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 1834 (Boston, 1834), chap. clxix, "An Act to establish the Massachusetts School Fund"; *Laws of Massachusetts*, 1835 (Boston, 1835), chap. cxxxviii, "An Act to provide for the Distribution of the Income of the Massachusetts School Fund."

¹⁷ *Massachusetts Senate Documents*, 1837, No. 42; the *Daily Sentinel and Gazette* on January 18, 1837, reported both parties in agreement that the Federal surplus should go to the towns. As a pro-Whig paper, it wanted to spike any Democratic attempt to claim all the credit for obtaining the money for the local communities.

¹⁸ (Horace Mann), Speech on the Disposal of the State Fund of 2 Million Dollars (February, 1837), manuscript in Mann Papers, MHS. Mann's hopes for the Fund and subsequent disappointment are described in Horace Mann to Elizabeth Peabody, n.d. (February, 1837), Mann Papers, MHS.

¹⁹ For a record of the attempts to specify the schools as recipients, see Journal of the Senate, Vol. 58, February 16, 21 and 28, 1837, pp. 213-15, 240 and 398, manuscript in MSA; the final law passed is in *Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 1837 (Boston, 1837), chap. lxxxv; the *Daily Sentinel and Gazette*, February 2, 1837 carried an account of the census debate.

eluded them and human nature seemed more intransigent than anticipated, they sought the restoration of the common good through means more public in nature. As a leader in the temperance movement, Mann too attempted to seek legal means to insure a sober community, but he gradually had come to embrace popular education as a more effective instrument, or as he said, "a reform to end the need for reform." No state, he reasoned, was properly organized if it lacked a "minister or secretary of instruction." In a simple society, the family could educate the children, but this was no longer possible in Massachusetts. A month before he accepted his new post, a gang of incendiaries attempted to set fire to the roof of his office while he slept. Fortunately, he suffered no physical harm, but he viewed the incident as another indication of an impending breakdown in morality, and he asked himself the following night, "When will society like a mother, take care of *all* her children?" Considering the need for a diffusion of knowledge throughout the republic, he had come to the conclusion by this time that "every child should be educated," and "if not educated by its own father then the state should appoint a father to it."²⁰

Similar sentiments were expressed the same year in a memorial to the legislature from the Bristol County Education Convention. "The pulpit, the press, the Sunday-school, the healthful discipline of the family," were helpful in maintaining the moral and intellectual well-being of the community, but it added that the schools should be singled out "in preference to all others as the instrument best calculated . . . to carry on the great and important work of qualifying every individual to add strength and beauty to the temple of republicanism. . . ." ²¹

Upon taking office, Mann did not abandon these traditional means for "qualifying every individual," but used his position to stimulate new efforts. What was to be accomplished by the Commonwealth did not come directly from its superior power to tax and coerce, but rather from its ability to encourage, coordinate and support the efforts of responsible individuals and groups on the local level.²² An early survey of the schools

²⁰ Horace Mann, Journal, May 27 and May 30, 1837, manuscript in Mann Papers, MHS.

²¹ *Massachusetts Senate Documents*, 1837, No. 44, "Memorial of the Bristol Co. Education Convention."

²² That this was clear from the very outset of his work can be seen from the following quotation from *Massachusetts Senate Documents*, 1838, No. 26, "First Annual Report of the Board of Education," pp. 6-7:

The limited powers conferred on the board left them scarce any discretion in the choice of means, by which they could enable their secretary to discharge his duty as thus prescribed. It was necessary to depend almost exclusively on the voluntary co-

had convinced him that the education of the young could no longer be left to the sole discretion of local boards.²³ Nor was the remedy to be found in a rigid state controlled system. Instead, he proposed to work through individuals, church groups, benevolent societies and teachers associations, helping them to accomplish what previously had seemed beyond their ability. "The maintenance of free schools," he wrote in his first *Annual Report*, "rests wholly upon the social principle. It is emphatically a case where men, individually powerless, are collectively strong."²⁴ That he continued to follow this principle can be seen from a letter written near the end of his secretaryship to his close friend Governor George Briggs. After organizing the school returns for the year, Mann took special satisfaction from the fact that the towns had increased their "voluntary appropriations" for education by more than fifty-thousand dollars.²⁵

His immediate task was to enlist support for the schools within each community. The Massachusetts law required every town to elect a school committee which was authorized to maintain a system of schools within its jurisdiction. The actual enforcement of the statute was lax, and the quality of education in any town was largely determined by the degree of public responsibility of its citizens. Mann was quick to observe that while the schoolboards were legal in status, they were largely voluntary in function.²⁶

To combat this lethargy, he organized and spoke to county and district meetings, enlisting local talent and support. Within the first six years of his secretaryship, he delivered hundreds of addresses, convincing his listeners of their duty to improve the schools.²⁷ As part of his *modus operandus* he encouraged the leaders in each community to publish notices and letters in the local newspapers, and prepare speeches and

operation of the people; and no way suggested itself in which this co-operation could be given so effectually, as through the medium of conventions called in each county of the Commonwealth, to be composed of teachers, school-commiteemen, and the friends of education generally, deputed from the several towns to attend these conventions.

²³ Horace Mann, *First Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board* (Boston, 1838), *passim*.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

²⁵ October 4, 1847, Briggs Papers, AAS.

²⁶ The school law of 1827 required each town to file an annual report with the Secretary to the Commonwealth, yet in 1832 only 86 towns out of more than 200 complied with the statute. *Massachusetts House Documents, 1832*, No. 52.

²⁷ After one of these a listener described his reactions as follows: "His Subject was the Human Mind. Such a Subject and in such hands, I can give you no idea of it but that it was without exception the best address that I have ever heard upon that Subject." John Porter to "Cousin," March (1847), Bangor, (Maine) Historical Society.

resolutions prior to a school convention. The result was that small groups of committed people began to join the reform movement. Mann's correspondence with them offered an impressive record of his effectiveness in activating their interest in the common schools and directing and sustaining it to concrete achievements.²⁸

Thus Mann believed that Massachusetts could only enjoy a condition of social health when there was a constant flow of ideas between the local and state level. It followed that his role was to be one of applying "the flesh-brush to excite its torpid circulation." Moreover, he saw the role of the Board of Education as that of a "forcing-pump" which "only wants to be used vigorously and it will inject blood into every vein and artery of the body politic."²⁹

Just how critical the condition of the patient really was could be gathered from the published reports of the town school committees. In going through these, Mann found in them patent evidence of incredibly incompetent teachers, unruly students and a veritable Babel of textbooks being used in the classrooms. Many singled out the dilapidated condition of their schoolhouses as the most visible manifestation of public apathy. Just how serious this had become in one community could be gathered from a report describing in mixed tones of realism and moral indignation the following picturesque edifice:

There is not a single public school house in town that is not a disgrace to us, and a sure and inevitable cause of much sickness and continued ill health to many of our children.

Let us take for instance the house in District No. 1, or Rocky Nook. It is one of the bleakest and most exposed situations in the district. Perched upon a sand hill with but little more than half the land it stands on belonging to the district—projecting six feet into the highway and liable at any time to be cut down by the surveyor—with an inch of ground for the children to exercise upon or even retire for the calls of nature without trespassing, and even then exposed to the gaze of every passer by in the streets, any where within a quarter of a mile of the house. What sort of a place is this, to send your sons and daughters to learn that most desirable of all virtues, modesty?³⁰

²⁸ For examples of this, see Horace Mann to Ichabod Morton, April 22, 1838, Mann Papers, MHS; Horace Mann to Charles Brooks, June 5, 1838, Straker Papers, Antioch College Library; Horace Mann to Robert Rantoul, June 26, 1838, Rantoul Papers, Essex Historical Institute; Horace Mann to George Briggs, July 6, 1839, Briggs Papers, AAS; Horace Mann to Alvan Lamson, March 30, 1846, Brown University Archives.

²⁹ Horace Mann to George Combe, January 1, 1841, Combe Papers, National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; Horace Mann to Cyrus Peirce, May 7, 1845, Mann Papers, MHS.

³⁰ Joseph S. Beal *et al. Report of the School Committee of Kingston* (Plymouth, 1839), pp. 5-6.

It was also to reach out to such localities that Mann issued his famous twelve *Annual Reports*. In addition, he distributed copies of his lectures and speeches. For the latter-day reader, these tend to be more hortatory than substantive, but in their own day they effectively awakened a dormant people's sense of private and public obligation to the next generation. So impressed with one of these lectures was the committee at Groton that it went to its several outlying districts and held meetings at which Mann's lecture was read verbatim to assembled audiences.³¹ The town reports also gave testimony that Mann's Reports were actually reaching people. Frequently they were cited as the guide for establishing schools which would fulfill their duties of educating citizens in a republican nation.³²

Mann also understood that there were changes taking place in the Commonwealth which required more direct state supervision and support. Along with their benefits, the new railroads were creating a number of social problems including an increasing number of children of Irish workers. As these people followed the progress of railroad construction, they had no continued residence in one place and therefore little claim on any town for the education of their children. If their presence was beyond the control of a single community, so was the responsibility for their children's schooling, and Mann took action to obtain financial support directly from the state.³³

Even those activities which led to the establishment of state controlled institutions indicated this blending of state with local responsibilities. Mann began the normal schools by first drawing funds from a private donor, then the state, and finally from town treasuries and groups of individuals.³⁴ When it was realized that these schools could help but a fraction of the more than six thousand teachers in Massachusetts, private funds again were matched to those of the Commonwealth to organize

³¹ William Torrey et al. *Annual Report of the School Committee of Groton, Massachusetts for the School Year of 1841-2* (Lowell, 1842), p. 8.

³² A sample of references can be found in the reports of the following towns: Topfield, 1843-44; Northborough, 1844-45; Wrentham, 1845-46; Scituate, 1846-47; West Newbury, 1847-48; Roxbury, 1848; Somerville, 1848-49.

³³ Alexander Ingham to Horace Mann, October 26 and December 25, 1839, Mann Papers, MHS.

³⁴ Frances Bowen, "Memoir of Edmund Dwight," *American Journal of Education*, IV (September 1857), 5-18; Horace Mann, Journal, March 10, 1838, manuscript in MHS; *Resolves of the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, 1838*, chap. lxx, "Resolves relative to qualifying teachers for Common Schools." The correspondence between Mann and Ichabod Morton and Samuel J. May in the Mann Papers, MHS indicates the kinds of problems faced in coordinating state and local efforts to establish the first state normal schools.

a system of statewide annual teachers' institutes.³⁵ This was a period in which the patterns of philanthropy were changing. The Lawrences and the Appletons turned down Mann's plea for funds, preferring to support Harvard and Williams which were becoming more private in nature.³⁶ Mann, however, was still able to tap the resources of Edmund Dwight, Josiah Quincy and others to furnish the initial impetus for normal schools, county institutes and the distribution of free books to teachers.³⁷ By a curious inversion of policy, he was able to obtain "venture capital" from private sources to prompt State action rather than the reverse. A precise definition of public and private responsibilities could wait. Mann's main concern was to implement educational reform; State action was a major reagent, although it needed the catalyst of private initiative.³⁸

The same problem of relating state action to local endeavors was also at the root of the controversies which plagued Mann's work as Secretary. The conflicts with Frederick Packard, the Boston schoolmasters, Governor Marcus Morton and the Reverend Matthew Hale Smith all were concerned basically with the delineation of state and local responsibility. Whether the contention was over the selection of library books as with Packard,³⁹ the locus of disciplinary authority as with the schoolmasters,⁴⁰ the return to complete local autonomy as with Morton,⁴¹ or with the

³⁵ Mann first officially proposed these in his *Eighth Annual Report* (1844), pp. 69-74; for a description of their actual operation, see his *Ninth Annual Report* (1845), pp. 43-46.

³⁶ Horace Mann to Cyrus Peirce, June 6, 1846, Mann Papers, MHS.

³⁷ E.g., see Josiah Quincy to Horace Mann, May 24, 1851 and Josiah Quincy to Barnas Sears, May 23, 1851, Mann Papers, MHS.

³⁸ Mann frequently convinced communities to provide full support for academies which previously had been financed in part or in whole by private funds. Conversely, some schools followed the path taken by Harvard, becoming increasingly dependent upon private sources. As with railroads and other commercial enterprises, the final formulation of a policy separating private and public function and responsibility was slow in coming. As late as 1859, a special committee of the Massachusetts House was unwilling to provide a formula by which private academies were to be distinguished from public high schools and thus cut off from public support. See *Massachusetts House Documents, 1859*, No. 261, "Academies Endowed by the State."

³⁹ The controversy with Frederick Packard of the American Sunday School Union can be followed in Horace Mann to Frederick Packard, March 18, June 26, July 11 and July 22, 1838 and Frederick Packard to Horace Mann, July 9 and September 19, 1838, Mann Papers, MHS.

⁴⁰ For a brief but lucid analysis of the pamphlet war which Mann waged with the Boston Schoolmasters, see Raymond B. Culver, *Horace Mann and Religion in the Massachusetts Public Schools* (New Haven, 1929), pp. 189-204.

⁴¹ The primary sources for this controversy are "Address of His Excellency Marcus Morton, to the Two Branches of the Legislature, on the Organization of the Government for the Political Year commencing January 1, 1840," *Massachusetts House Documents, 1840* (Boston, 1840), No. 9; a majority report urging the abolition of the State

legal sanction of a body of religious teachings in the schools as (with Smith,⁴² all hinged on the problem of determining the basis of authority for establishing school practices and policies. Whether Mann stated the definitive position on the teaching of religion in the schools can be debated, but it is clear that in each of these he was not only aware of an increasing religious and social pluralism in the Commonwealth, but he was sensitive to the spread of local apathy as it expressed itself in a decline of communal and familial concern for the welfare of children. The position of each of his opponents was the desire to return to a less complex society, but Mann would not brook what he thought was an irresponsible individualism and urged in its place a system of moral education which would counteract sectarian and local jealousies and create a broadly based community of consent.

Although no love was lost between Mann and his successor, Barnas Sears, the latter, after having been in office little more than a year acknowledged that, "One thing is certain, what has already been done, instead of being made an argument for not having done anything further, has had the contrary effect. It is now more necessary to *guide* than to arouse. . ." ⁴³ As might be expected, Mann's work of "arousal" was accompanied by dire predictions of encroaching governmental control and the inevitable destruction of American liberties. More than one community, sensing its humiliation from Mann's relentless exposure, labeled him a meddler in its "private" affairs and saw the establishment of the normal schools as a pernicious development which would ultimately undermine their local autonomy.⁴⁴ Mann was denounced as a "Prussian" and an "infidel" by his opponents. In this they were wrong. Decentralized control would remain, but it was to survive only at the price of innovation and accommodation.⁴⁵

Board of Education and its Secretary, and a minority report are found in the *Massachusetts House Documents, 1840*, Nos. 49 and 53. According to the former,

Our system of instruction has proceeded upon the idea, that the local administrators of affairs, that is to say, the school committees of the several towns and districts, are qualified to superintend the schools, and might be trusted with that superintendence.

⁴² Smith's main arguments against Mann and the Board of Education are in Matthew Hale Smith, *The Bible, the Rod, and Religion, in Common Schools. The Ark of God on a New Cart. . . Correspondence between the Hon. Horace Mann, Sec. of the Board of Education, and Rev. Matthew Hale Smith* (Boston, 1847).

⁴³ Barnas Sears to Horace Mann, February 11, 1850, Mann Papers, MHS.

⁴⁴ E.g., see William G. Slade et al. *Report of the School Committee of the Town of Westport . . . April 3, 1843* (New Bedford, 1843), pp. 5-11.

⁴⁵ His opponents were even wrong in their assumption that educational reform in Prussia was solely the result of royal edict. In his *Rapport sur L'Etat de L'Instruction Publique dans Quelques Pays de L'Allemagne et Particulierment en Prusse* (Paris, 1833), Victor Cousin noted that even the authoritarian Prussians could not impose their cele-

This analysis of Mann's activities, both prior to and after 1837, suggests a different perspective on his role as an educational reformer, a perspective which should clarify the importance of his contribution to American culture. Neither the hero thesis nor an economic or ideological determinism will suffice. The full meaning of his work is neither to be found in a narrative of a single-handed sacrifice for the next generation, nor explained in terms of a thinly veiled attempt to justify and secure the interests of the propertied classes of Massachusetts. Conversely, it is also inaccurate to picture him as unsuspectingly caught up in a wave of democratic enthusiasm for popular education.⁴⁶

Such interpretations have overlooked his more general desire to counteract the spread of irresponsible individualism and local apathy. Against such social developments, the traditional mores appeared to be less effective. The old integrated family, congregation and village which he knew as a boy were now exerting less of a centripetal force in maintaining a sense of community among the people. In the face of these changes, Mann would have relied in vain on the emergence of an aristocratic elite whose exemplary role would be emulated by lesser individuals, a development that De Tocqueville had found entirely missing in the New World.⁴⁷ Nor could he expect success by invoking some autocratic and centralized state power to maintain civil responsibility. Both measures for codifying and motivating social behavior were familiar to continental Europe. But America was to be different. Several decades after De Tocque-

brated school law of 1819 by fiat in those provinces where it was not preceded by custom and tradition agreeable to it. According to the French observer,

Le plus difficile était d'obtenir des nouvelles provinces, et particulièrement de celles du Rhin si récemment annexées à la monarchie, l'exécution d'article de la loi qui impose aux parens, sous des peines rigoureuses, l'obligation d'envoyer leurs enfans à l'école. Le ministère eut la sagesse de suspendre pour ces provinces cette partie de la loi, et il s'efforça d'arriver à peu près au même résultat par la persuasion et à force de zèle; . . . (p. 244).

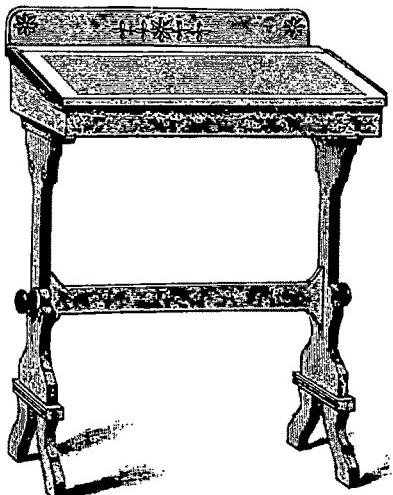
⁴⁶ As this applies to Mann, by extension it can be applied to the entire common school reform movement. Until recently, the Whigs have been depicted as reluctant supporters of increased free public education, even though such leaders in the movement as Henry Barnard and Mann had been Whig politicians and such groups as the Massachusetts State Board of Education were predominantly Whig. That this interpretation needs further investigation is suggested by Lee Benson's provocative study, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton, 1961), especially pp. 86-109. Benson maintains that by the 1830s, both Whigs and Democrats supported a liberal political doctrine. He distinguishes them, however, by showing that the Democrats largely favored a program of "negative liberalism," i.e. the abolition of legalized monopolies, increased freedom for individuals to pursue their self-interest, and the state largely functioning as a regulatory agency. By comparison, the Whigs favored a "positive liberal state" whose responsibilities included an active involvement in state support of education.

⁴⁷ Alexis De Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, II, chap. v.

ville's visit, Adam De Gurowski could observe that the United States had "inaugurated for the first time in the history of a culture, a people educating itself. . . . In Europe," he continued, "the education of the people is the task of governments acting from above; . . . The educational system in the American public common schools is the highest triumph of democracy and self-government."⁴⁸ To achieve this in Massachusetts, Mann had employed a pragmatic and piecemeal approach which increased the centralized influence of the Commonwealth while at the same time re-activating the more traditional local autonomy.

It is true that early in his career, he incorrectly diagnosed the rise of intemperance, crime and lawlessness as incipient causes of a general breakdown of society rather than symptoms of more fundamental changes. In time, however, he recognized these for what they were, and reacted with an insight, energy and sense of dedication which exceeded those of any other educational reformer. At a time when individuals and groups sought a variety of new political, social and economic interests and loyalties with which they might identify themselves, Mann considered education the best means of promoting a set of common values which would create a society in which people could be both unified and free.

⁴⁸ *America and Europe* (New York, 1857), pp. 287-88.



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Narrative Without Accent: Willa Cather and Puvis de Chavannes

IN A LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF *Commonweal* WILLA CATHER DESCRIBES THE genesis of *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. She had seen Puvis de Chavannes' frescoes of the life of Ste Geneviève and had determined to do something similar in prose. "Something without accent" were her words, "something in the style of legend, which is absolutely the reverse of dramatic treatment."¹ Although several critics have mentioned the similarities between the narrative and the painting, none has examined these similarities in any detail. A comparison of the painting and the novel not only sheds light on the novel but also provides an alternative to the cul de sac which criticism seems to have reached. Some critics, analyzing her work on the basis of biographical influences, feel that Miss Cather's writing too often culminates in withdrawal and escape from reality. The *Archbishop* is a failure, according to John Randall, because it avoids conflict, ugliness and pain, and omits deep emotion.² More recent critics make the opposite judgment. The novel is superb; further, although there are only two notable departures from the essential historical facts behind the story, the author's main concern is not with the historical matrix itself, but with a profounder meaning behind the facts.³ In this view there is a deeper engagement with reality—not an escape.

The familiar arguments about what constitutes a true engagement with reality can be extended indefinitely with little profit. But where these discussions end in point-blank contradictions, a study of the painting that started the writing provides insight into the contradictions themselves. Is the *Archbishop* commendable because it demonstrates the "solid

¹ Willa Cather on Writing (New York, 1949), p. 9.

² John Randall, *The Landscape and the Looking Glass* (Boston, 1960), p. 310.

³ Edward & Lillian Bloom, *Willa Cather's Gift of Sympathy* (Carbondale, 1962), p. 236.

virtues of an inspiriting past" in contrast to the "mercurial shifts of practical reality"?⁴ Or is it deplorable as a "vision of life which is pitifully maimed and inadequate . . . at times superficial . . . at times downright dishonest"?⁵ Underlying this dispute is the question of Cather's basic attitude toward the historical materials. An examination of the painting of Puvis de Chavannes clarifies this attitude.

First a few details from the memorialization of Geneviève are relevant. As the leader of her people against the Huns in 451, she was made the patroness of Paris. Also, she is said to have established the church of St. Denis; in the latter part of the eighteenth century the Panthéon was built on the site of her tomb. In the 1870s Puvis de Chavannes was commissioned to paint a memorial on the walls of the Panthéon.

At a time when art was being given new directions by Renoir, Monet, Gauguin and others, Puvis de Chavannes was an enigma. He avoided the new optical analysis of the impressionists and returned to the monumental painting of the Renaissance. Comments about his work sound rather like those about Cather's novel. To André Michel, reviewing Chavannes' exhibit of 1888 in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Puvis was "disdainful of actuality," and yet curiously, one day, "in the great confusion of philosophers and doctrinaire realists, he might be not simply the most noble but one of the most suggestive and the most *documentary* painters of our times."⁶

Ste Geneviève, like Latour in Cather's novel, had built a church; and like the novel, the mural completed by Puvis represented a monument combining religious and patriotic themes. Commenting on this quality in the frescoes, the biographer Vachon said that they suggest immediately the great painters of the Florentine Renaissance.⁷ The mural "L'Enfance de Sainte Geneviève" is divided into four panels with a frieze. In a central panel the child Geneviève is shown in the countryside of Nanterre, where she is recognized by Saint Germain. The women are kneeling before the bishops; the countrymen regard the scene with respectful curiosity. The accompanying panels portray scenes of arrested life: the sick are brought to be healed, a woodsman or shepherd and his family watch Geneviève at prayer, and scattered throughout are details of daily life—peasants, sheep, fowls and cattle.

There is little reason to describe the minutiae of the painting, because the main interest in comparison with the *Archbishop* lies in the style.

⁴ Bloom, p. 236.

⁵ Randall, p. 310.

⁶ André Michel, "Exposition de M. Puvis de Chavannes," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 2^e pér., t. XXXVII (1888), p. 44.

⁷ Marius Vachon, *Puvis de Chavannes* (Paris, 1895), p. 108. Good reproductions of the mural are in this volume or in Arsene Alexandre, *Chavannes* (London, n.d.).



Detail from "Ste Genèvieve en Prière" by Puvis de Chavannes.

Yet it can be pointed out that as Geneviève's mission is foretold by the bishops, so Latour is commissioned by the Cardinal in the Prologue. Like Geneviève, Latour prays before a rustic or natural cross: Latour and Geneviève minister to the country people; they build a church; they are, in short, legendary figures in the early history of their country. To compare, say, the historical reality of the woodsman in the painting with that of a figure like Kit Carson in the narrative would be absurd. Yet this point should be made: it is no more ridiculous, considering the aim of the painter, to criticize the image of the woodsman as not being historically accurate for the fifth century, than it is to criticize the fictional Carson for being unlike the actual trapper. The painting and the narrative are highly stylized.

Movement in the *Archbishop* is like that of a viewer moving from picture to picture, panel to panel. It is a commonplace in criticism to note the effect of tableaux in the *Archbishop* from Latour's youth to his death. Whatever is claimed for the work, it is not dramatic action. A scene in Rome opens the story; a scene in New Mexico, with parallels from earlier passages, closes it. One writer suggests that the book is like a triple triptych. In this view, the very divisions of the narrative are comparable to the sound of the Angelus which rouses the Bishop from sleep in the clear air of the new land.⁸ *Triptych* connotes the pictorial quality of the narrative. But whatever the term of comparison, the appearance of immobility, definitive in Puvis' painting, is clearly present in the novel.

Concerning the more important matters of style, it has been said that the frescoes of Ste Geneviève are marked by the characteristics of the monumental style. First, static figures are arranged in groups without the suggestion of motion. Progression is given by the movement of the viewer from panel to panel. Puvis himself implies such by referring to the first panel as a prologue. Moreover, there is little distinction between foreground and background, a quality that echoes medieval painting. The word *immobility* may be used appropriately for both the static quality and the flatness of the painting, since the figures do not suggest movement, nor is the eye of the viewer made to travel long lines of perspective. Whatever unity the work has cannot be said to derive from merging lines or converging action.

Secondly, Chavannes' paintings are marked by the use of light and color. There are flat tones, few contrasts and no vivid colors. The total effect of color in the painting is that of monotonies overlaid with a kind of pale light, which, metaphorically, seems to put a distance in time or space between the viewer and the objects viewed. The translucent quality

⁸ Robert Gale, *Explicator*, XXXI (May 1963), item 75.

suggests a patina in which all lines are softened; or the light seems a medium in which all objects and figures are suspended outside of time.

The immobility, flat tones and pale light, and the detachment or distance, then, give the paintings the effect of a stylized monument, rather than the vigorous color and contrast, say, of a Renoir or a Gauguin. Similarly, there is a flatness, a lack of emphasis in the *Archbishop*. The opening scenes at Rome are a combination of landscape and still life: "It was early when the Spanish Cardinal and his guests sat down to dinner. The sun was still good for an hour of supreme splendour, and across the shining folds of country the low profile of the city barely fretted the skyline—indistinct except for the dome of St. Peter's, bluish grey like the flattened top of a great balloon, just a flash of copper light on its soft metallic surface."⁹ Yet this panoramic scene is not treated in any more or less detail than the dinner table or the "long gravelled terrace and its balustrade—blue as a lake in the dusky air" in the foreground. The Spanish Cardinal is hardly stressed more than the allusion in the conversation to the dancing girl who had become *croyante* and who was singing in the new opera by Verdi. Perhaps significantly, the last anecdote of the prologue deals with an El Greco painting of St. Francis. The painting alluded to is, of course, filled with contrast in light and dark, with the tortuous El Greco lines—but the scene in which the portrait is discussed is as calm as the soft summer air surrounding the Sabine hills. The suggestion of intense feeling is framed by stillness, and this precisely describes Willa Cather's attitude toward her materials. The emotions of her characters are framed by a kind of detached calm. More relevant to the main theme of the story is the character of Vaillant as opposed to that of Latour. One critic complains that whereas the energy of Joseph is always threatening to break through the plan of the novel, to humanize the narrative with his "hopeful rashness," the author always subdues this impulse and preserves the thoughtful, but artificial order represented in Latour. Vaillant, says this critic, represents life; Latour represents art. Cather has confused art and life, and her so-called order is specious, lacking in conflict and therefore in humanity. It would be better, from this point of view, to have one main character who suffered within himself conflicts between beauty and morality.¹⁰

In other words, the author has avoided an internal conflict, and has put the opposing qualities in different characters, as in a morality play, or a legend. This assuredly results in some flatness in characterization. Yet if the theme has to do with the interrelation of moral and aesthetic order and primitive energy, it must be appropriate to have the quality

⁹ *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (New York, 1951), p. 4.

¹⁰ Randall, p. 276.

of the main character—a love of order—dominate the book. The Cardinal says of the new candidate in the prologue: "He must be a man to whom order is necessary, as dear as life."¹¹ The dominance is expressed in small quiet details—the Bishop's taste in art, in food, as well as in, say, his treatment of the mutinous Father Martinez. The events that reveal character have a likeness—an equality of stress—that suggests a medieval tapestry.

Puvis wrote that he wanted the central figure of Geneviève in his painting to provide the tone for the whole scene; and Cather, similarly, makes Latour's character suffuse the whole narrative. This is done, however, not by making the action involve the Bishop at every point, but by presenting the scenes in a style which presupposes the value of order and restraint—a value that distinguishes the Bishop. The effect then is that of the clarity, order and light which pervade the frescoes.

Indeed, the effect of light, literally represented in the narrative, is so marked that Randall objects to it as a substitute for action: "The effect is a good deal more passive and static than the previous effects obtained in earlier novels. She now uses tonal climaxes with light instead of emotional climaxes of action."¹² In the prologue which sets the mode of light and color for the whole book, the author writes, "The vehemence of the sun suggested motion. The light was full of action and had a peculiar quality of climax—of splendid finish. It was both intense and soft. . . ." Since she has so clearly stated her goal, to write something "which is absolutely the reverse of dramatic treatment," and has so clearly begun in this graphic mode, it seems irrelevant to criticize the lack of conflict. Puvis spoke of the light in his painting: "The general aspect was tender and soft, like the soul of that child which must . . . bathe the whole composition."¹³ This kind of light, relating the events to the theme, pervades the novel. The light on the "carnelian colored" hills outside Santa Fe, the great plain near Acoma "glittering with rain sheets but the distant mountains bright with sunlight;" the mesa itself, where "the bare stone floor of the town and its deep worn paths were washed white and clear," the Indians kneeling in the grey light like antedeluvian creatures, and the Archbishop's new cathedral, "yellow, a strong golden ochre, very much like the gold of the sunlight that was now beating upon it."¹⁴

The westward movement of the light is the action, and the color of the sun is fittingly assigned to the Bishop's monument, the cathedral of native stone. The symbolic overtones of the scene are typical: Latour is aging; it is late afternoon. Once again the Bishop and Vaillant have ridden

¹¹ *Archbishop*, p. 8.

¹² Randall, p. 291.

¹³ J. Buisson, "Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, Souvenirs Intimes," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 3^e pér., t. XXII (1899), p. 19.

¹⁴ *Archbishop*, p. 241.

west. They look up at "the rugged wall, gleaming gold above them. 'That hill, *Blanchet*, is my cathedral.'" The use of light after the manner of Puvis de Chavannes has enabled Willa Cather to deal with two commonplace and difficult subjects, the westward movement and religion, in a delicately stylized manner that almost always preserves the novel from hackneyed plot and the merely picturesque scene. Such are the uses of immobility, flatness and light that Willa Cather brings from painting to fiction. The last quality, *distance* or detachment, is perhaps the most significant, and yet the most difficult to analyze.

In his essay on "Point of View in the Arts" Ortega y Gassett distinguishes in painting "proximate vision" from "distant vision."¹⁵ In his words "the *proximate vision* and the *distant vision* of which physiology speaks are not notions that depend chiefly on measurable factors, but are rather two distinct ways of seeing." So, for example, if we picture an earthen jar in a foreground and landscape in the background, our eyes are focused on the jar and we sense its very surface, even the tactile quality. The objects in the background are blurred, hardly identifiable. There is a central object, a "luminous hero" as Ortega says, "a protagonist standing out against a mass, a visual plebs." This earthen jar represents proximate vision. But when the eye reaches the distant horizon, the optical hierarchy disappears. The field is homogeneous; everything is equal in a kind of optical democracy. All tactile or textural quality has, of course, disappeared. This is distant vision, in which there is little focus. One further characteristic of distant vision is the hollow space between us and the object. Proximate vision, then, analyzes, treats each object with respect for its volume, roundness, solidity. Every external object is as real as every other. Distant vision overlays the object with the medium contiguous to both object and eye—namely, space. One can almost say that space *unifies* the field.

In a most convincing manner Ortega demonstrates his thesis that the history of the arts in Europe has been a record of the painter's point of view changing from proximate to distant vision. Quattrocento artists seem to paint each object separately. Later Velasquez paints objects veiled by space. A single point of view dominates. Here space is a governing idea. Then the impressionists retreat further toward the eye itself, and the process of *seeing*, the breaking up of the light, receives the attention. Finally in cubism, painting has gone into the consciousness itself and from the external realities of the quattrocento, painting has receded into the mind: from *things*, through *sensations* to *ideas*; or from external

¹⁵ José Ortega y Gassett, "On Point of View in the Arts," *Partisan Review*, XVI (August 1949), pp. 822-24.

reality, to the subjective reality, and finally the intrasubjective. To summarize Ortega's somewhat complex idea: the evolution of Western painting consists in "a retraction from the object toward the subject, the painter himself."

It is significant that when impressionists were directing the point of view of art further inward, Puvis de Chavannes went back to an earlier period. His monumental style seems created by a desire for a "calm poetry inspired by the history and legends of civilization."¹⁶ He goes back toward the Renaissance for the clarity of his individual figures, and their flatness and their lack of accent suggest the distant vision as defined by Ortega. His works, like earlier art, may be wanting in cohesion, but the idea of distance, and especially the overlaid light, imply a special attitude toward the events of history.

That is to say, the idea of distance or space develops into a style in which historical events are monuments. These monuments are illumined by the painter, but they are neither copies of the "actual" nor projections of arbitrary forms in his mind. It is surely this quality that Michel had in mind when he said that Puvis de Chavannes might sometime be regarded as the most documentary of painters.

What has been said of the painter applies precisely to Willa Cather. Writing at a time when the innovations of Joyce and others had led fiction *within* the mind, within the process of consciousness, Cather turned to an earlier period. The distance, the detachment, with which she treats her historical subjects has the effect of the monumental style. Historical events are contained in that style not as "actuality," nor as anarchic forms within the mind, but as events ordered by a tradition. In this tradition, as in a legend, light is a correlative of belief, and space is a correlative of freedom. Thus the style and the subject are closely related. The sunlight and distance of the Southwestern landscape are important subjects of the narrative. The manner in which the light and the space are used, the manner of stasis instead of accent, of distant vision instead of perspective, of suffusion of light instead of dramatic action, is parallel to what is "monumental" in Puvis' frescoes.

For Willa Cather's characters, belief illuminated and ordered history. For the novelist herself, space in the land implied the freedom in which belief erected monuments. The Archbishop built his church of native golden stone where there was "something . . . wild and free, something that . . . lightened the heart, softly, softly picked the lock, slid the bolts, and released the prisoned spirit of man into the wind."¹⁷

¹⁶ *Dictionary of Modern Painting*, eds. Carlton Lake and Robert Maillard (New York, n.d.) p. 239.

¹⁷ *Archbishop*, p. 276.

Notes

Gertrude Stein in the Psychology Laboratory

READERS OF *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* KNOW THAT GERTRUDE Stein worked in experimental psychology under William James. She was at the time a Radcliffe undergraduate, and her previous mentor in psychology, Hugo Münsterberg, had found her "the model of what a young scholar should be."¹ With another young student, Leon Solomons, the precocious Miss Stein worked on such projects as "The Place of Repetition in Memory," "Fluctuations of the Attention" and "The Saturation of Colors," including herself among the subjects.² In September 1896, they published some results of their experiments as "Normal Motor Automation," in the *Psychological Review*.³ Two years later Gertrude Stein alone wrote another article based on the same experiments.⁴ These first publications prefigure some of the controlling ideas in her earliest fiction, and they are worth examining for the light they can shed on *Things as They Are* (1903, published 1950), *Three Lives* (1904-5, published 1909), *The Making of Americans* (1906-11, published 1925) and *Tender Buttons* (1914).

Gertrude Stein and Leon Solomons were mainly interested in testing the limits of their subjects' attention. They asked them to write repeatedly the same letter while reading a story aloud. In another experiment the subject read a story aloud while attempting to record words that Miss Stein or Mr. Solomons read to him. In another, the subject tried to read aloud a dull story while listening to an interesting one. The experimenters wanted to discover the limits of conscious attention, by seeing how long a person could concentrate before fatigue would allow his unconscious reactions to disturb his attentiveness.

What they discovered was that the average person's attention began to waver almost immediately. Especially when asked to write the same letter repeatedly, the subjects began involuntarily to write words from the story. Even when conscious of repeating the same involuntary action,

¹ John Malcolm Brinnin, *The Third Rose: Gertrude Stein and Her World* (Boston, 1959), p. 29.

² *Ibid.*

³ III (1896), 492-512. Solomons died in 1900 from an infection contracted in the laboratory.

⁴ "Cultivated Motor Automatism," *Psychological Review*, V (1898), 295-306.

they were still unable to prevent it. Moreover, the subject wrote with seemingly no break in his attention to what was being read. This indicated that in most instances unconscious reactions could not be completely overridden by conscious attention. One exception to the rule, however, was Gertrude Stein herself, who, as she later directs Alice B. Toklas to say, "never had subconscious reactions, nor was she a successful subject for automatic writing."⁵

At it turned out, the most notorious experiment was ultimately "automatic writing." A planchette with a pencil was hung from the ceiling, and the subject was instructed to hold the pencil over a piece of paper while one of the experimenters read a story to him. If the subject began to write even while concentrating on the story, the assumption would be that his hand was being unconsciously directed. This particular experiment met with only moderate success, many of the subjects producing nothing but scribbles and gibberish. However, enough students responded "automatically" to allow Miss Stein and Mr. Solomons to make the following generalization: automatic writing reveals "*a marked tendency to repetition* [their italics]—A phrase would seem to get into the head and keep repeating itself at every opportunity, and hang over from day to day even."⁶ An example they used, "'When he could not be the longest and thus to be, and thus to be, the strongest,'"⁷ reads suspiciously like a line from Gertrude Stein's later writings.

In 1934 the Harvard behaviorist, B. F. Skinner, rediscovered this early article and wrote about it in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In "Normal Motor Automatism," Professor Skinner claimed to have found the key to the ambiguities of *Tender Buttons*, in lines such as the one in the previous paragraph: the writings in *Tender Buttons* are examples of automatic writing. However, they are less the writings of a second or unconscious personality than of Gertrude Stein's arm.

. . . although it is quite plausible that the work is due to a second personality successfully split off from Miss Stein's conscious self, it is a very flimsy sort of personality indeed. It is intellectually unopinionated, is emotionally cold, and has no past. It is unread and unlearned beyond grammar school. It is as easily influenced as a child; a heard word may force itself into whatever sentence may be under construction at the moment, or it may break the sentence up altogether and irremediably. Its literary materials are the sensory things nearest at hand—objects, sounds, tastes, smells, and so on.⁸

⁵ *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*, p. 79.

⁶ "Normal Motor Automatism," p. 506.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Has Gertrude Stein a Secret?" *Atlantic*, CLIII (January 1934), 53.

Although written in a debunking spirit, Professor Skinner's remarks are a more than adequate description of some of the major characteristics of Gertrude Stein's writing. What he has described is Miss Stein's conception of the "human mind," which she contrasts to "human nature." To Miss Stein human nature is that part of man's consciousness that makes relationships among objects, that has memory, that self-consciously refers back to its own identity, that has emotions, that is burdened with knowledge outside its immediate perceptions. The human mind has no emotions, memory, identity or past. It is simply that part of the human consciousness that does nothing but perceive whatever data is immediately available to the senses. The process of writing transfers the knowledge of the human mind to paper as quickly as it is perceived. It has nothing to do with any past knowledge because "the human mind knows what it knows and knowing what it knows it has nothing to do with seeing what it remembers. . ."⁹

Though Professor Skinner's description of the consciousness that wrote *Tender Buttons* may be accurate, his accusation that Miss Stein wrote automatically is not. Quite aware of the characteristics of "automatic writing," Gertrude Stein developed some of its surface attributes into a conscious aesthetic. Only by writing consciously could Gertrude Stein consistently maintain a style that excluded so many elements of "human nature." The surrealists used automatic writing to delve into the fantasies of the unconscious. But the unconscious, as any reader of Freud knows, has everything to do with the past, with identity and with emotions, all of which Gertrude Stein consciously attempts to outlaw from her writing. To contend that she sat in her studio waiting for impulses to direct her hand over the page, and in this way managed to produce forty books or more, stretches credibility. If the consciousness that created *Tender Buttons* strikes Professor Skinner as "unread and unlearned beyond grammar school," perhaps Laura Riding had answered that contention already:

Gertrude Stein, by combining the functions of critic and poet and taking everything around her very literally and many things for granted which others have not been naive enough to take so, has done what everyone else has been ashamed to do. No one but she has been willing to be as ordinary, as simple, as primitive, as stupid, as barbaric as successful barbarism demands.¹⁰

⁹ Gertrude Stein, *The Geographical History of America* (New York, 1936), p. 27. This work contains Miss Stein's fullest discussion of "human nature" and "human mind."

¹⁰ "The New Barbarian and Gertrude Stein," *transition*, I (June 1927), 157.

We can learn even more of relevance to Miss Stein's creative writings from her second article. Leon Solomons wrote most of the first article himself, although Gertrude Stein may have had a hand in the revisions. Indeed, she disagreed with many of the conclusions favorable to automatic writing. In the article she wrote under her own name in 1898, she gave more attention to things that particularly interested her. She described this many years later:

Then as I say I became more interested in psychology, and one of the things I did was testing reactions of the average college student in a state of normal activity and in the state of fatigue induced by their examinations. I was supposed to be interested in their reactions but soon I found that I was not but instead that I was enormously interested in the types of their characters that is what I even then thought of as the bottom nature of them, and when in May 1898 I wrote my half of the report of these experiments I expressed these results as follows:

In these descriptions it will be readily observed that habits of attention are reflexes of the complete character of the individual.¹¹

The key word in this paragraph is "type." Moreover, it is not a word Gertrude Stein decided to use forty years later to discuss the rationale behind her own writing, but one that appears over and over in the 1898 article. Gertrude Stein asks in the beginning of her article how the different "types of character" react to automatic writing.¹² She was mainly interested in the people involved in her experiments and not the data they provided; not their reactions to what they were doing but how they seemed to her to manifest themselves as prototypes. This prefigures her early fictional method in which the action of the individual is less important than how his actions follow from a typologically determined personality.

The experiments had derived their subjects primarily from Radcliffe and Harvard students, some of whom Miss Stein describes as follows:

A large number of my subjects were New Englanders, and the habit of self-repression, the intense self-consciousness, the morbid fear of "letting one's self go," that is so prominent an element in the New England character, was a constant stumbling-block.¹³

The article is full of her personal and undocumented (indeed, undocumented) observations, and it would almost certainly not be accepted

¹¹ "The Gradual Making of The Making of Americans," *Lectures in America* (Boston, 1957), pp. 137-38.

¹² "Cultivated Motor Automatism," p. 295.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

by a scientific journal today; but we can be thankful for the relaxed standards of a young science, for the article affords valuable evidence of Miss Stein's continuing notions of the innate personality of different types and the characteristics that make up the "bottom natures" of people. Five years later in *Things as They Are*, Miss Stein used almost the exact attributes ascribed above to her New England type in the characterization of Sophie Neathe. One could probably take the typological descriptions from this article and find corresponding fictional characters in Miss Stern's writing. However, that kind of detective work seems less important than discovering in the article the earliest published evidence of Miss Stein's theory of psychological types.

Gertrude Stein divided her subjects into a number of categories:

Type I. This consists mostly of girls who are found naturally in literature courses and men who are going in for law. The type is nervous, high strung, very imaginative, has the capacity to be easily roused and intensely interested. Their attention is strongly and easily held by something that interests them, even to the extent quite commonly expressed of being oblivious to everything else. But, on the other hand, they find it hard to concentrate on anything that does not catch the attention and hold the interest.¹⁴

The personal judgments and generalizations of this passage would make a contemporary psychologist smile; but Gertrude Stein is only warming up:

Type II is very different from Type I, is more varied, and gives more interesting results. In general, the individuals, often blonde and pale, are distinctly phlegmatic. If emotional, decidedly of a weakish sentimental order. They may be either large, healthy, rather heavy and lacking in vigor, or they may be what we call anaemic and phlegmatic. Their power of concentrated attention is very small. They describe themselves as never being held by their work; they say that their minds wander easily; that they work on after they are tired and just keep pegging away.¹⁵

These are the kinds of assumptions Gertrude Stein was willing to make; but I do not propose to judge her as a scientist. Had she been a good scientist rather than one merely scientifically inclined, she might never have turned to writing fiction.

What we can learn from this article is that five years before Miss Stein began to write her first fictional work her conception of personality was

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-98.

already formed around the notion of the controlling type. In her long descriptions she lists not only physical characteristics, but mental, emotional and other behavioral traits. She subsumed all facets of the individual as a behavioral organism under the characteristics of the type.

This becomes apparent in writings such as *Three Lives* and *The Making of Americans*, in which the characters function almost solely as demonstrations of a proposition made by the author about a personality type. The type arises from racial, national or parental heritage, and it is something no one can escape.

Melantha was pale yellow and mysterious and a little pleasant like her mother, but the real power in Melantha's nature came through her robust and unpleasant and very unendurable black father.¹⁶

She [Melantha] had not been raised like Rose by white folks but then she had been half made with real white blood.¹⁷

Julia Dehning was now just eighteen and she showed in all its vigor, the self-satisfied crude domineering American girlhood that was strong inside her.¹⁸

Miss Stein says in the opening lines of *The Making of Americans*, "It is hard living down the tempers we are born with."¹⁹ Personality arises directly from the type into which we are born, and all the characteristics of the individual are determined thereby. These notions are expressed quite clearly in "Cultivated Motor Automatism," and we must turn to it to understand the origins of Miss Stein's static fictional portraits.

Gertrude Stein's deterministic theories of personality had, if not their beginnings, then certainly a great part of their development in William James' laboratory. Her concepts of consciousness and the deterministic type, the two pillars of her theory of personality, were developed long before she began to publish fictional constructs of her ideas.

MICHAEL J. HOFFMAN, *University of Pennsylvania*

¹⁶ *Three Lives* (New York, 1936), p. 90.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁸ *The Making of Americans* (Paris, 1925), p. 13.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.



Reviews

Conducted by Theodore Hornberger

Scholarly Strategy: The Poe Case

A SUBTLE FLUID IS AN INVISIBLE WHATSIT WHICH A SCIENTIST INVENTS TO salvage a theory which has some bugs in it but which is still too useful to discard. In explaining a literary allusion to a subtle fluid, I had occasion to ask a class to think of a modern instance of one. The students quickly came up with several, among them the various subatomic particles which physicists, past and present, have proposed to account for irregularities in data. Neither I nor my students are physicists, but we had all heard of the direction in which research was going in a field not our own. Would a scientist or other layman know, say, that in our field Stephen Crane today seems a little less a rebel, a little more a child of his times, than he did ten years ago? The fact that he would not hints that scientists do a better job of communicating with laymen than we do. One might of course argue that the public is more interested in the neutrino than in the life and hard times of Stephen Crane; perhaps, but a quick check with one's colleagues is liable to indicate that they too know more about the direction of research in subatomic physics (or whatever it's called) than they do about Crane studies. Literary scholars do not, it would seem, do a good job of communicating with specialists, let alone with laymen.

Now, it would probably be a Good Thing if scholarly investigation in the social sciences and the humanities were generally cumulative, the way it is in many fields of science. I did not mean here to propose any too simplistic definition of knowledge, final truth or the approaches to either, and friends in the sciences to whom I have made remarks of this sort have always been quick to point out that science is not the best of all possible scholarly worlds. I think, nevertheless, that scientists have generally a more healthy approach to the issues of publication and the transmission of knowledge. It is a commonplace among historians that there is at least a thirty-year gap between good new work and the textbook; while re-Revisionist grapples with re-re-Revisionist in the history journals, textbook presses turn out books innocent of developments since Turner. But even historians (and I mean the word "even" playfully) seem to have less difficulty in this matter than do students of the arts. In any field the problem is especially critical for interdisciplinarians, who very much need access to good general statements of the direction in which work is going in areas outside their own fields of special competence.

James Conant speaks of scientific "tactics and strategy." There is a scholarly "tactics and strategy" as well, though too many authors of journal articles write without thought of the body of knowledge to which they are presumably making a contribution. Their footnotes give them away—they are more an indication that the author has served a sort of penance than a record of an intellectual pilgrimage. The results are bad for scholarly morale. It might be worth our while, even at the risk of oversimplifying, to make clear, in the classroom and in our own published work, what we feel is the relationship between research, scholarship and the state of our knowledge of any given problem. A kind of literary scholarship with an unenviable reputation for aridity, for example, is the source study. What good is a source study? There is an easy answer at hand: an article entitled "Another Source for Poe's 'Metzengerstein'" is a contribution to human knowledge, and as such an end in itself. But an answer of this sort will not satisfy a pragmatically minded student. Our analogy with the sciences may be of some use here. The source study might be considered as bringing in another item of data, the result, so to speak, of another bit of "pure" research, good in itself, of course, but also "on the record," and, presumably, available to some later investigator who has in mind a larger issue and who is looking around for data already gathered which may shed some light on his problem. The relationship between the two types of study is rather like that between pure and applied science, except that "applied" in the humanities will have to mean "of use to other scholars." Ideally, we interdisciplinary scholars should add, the results of "pure" scholarship should be accessible to "applied" scholars working outside of the field as well. Perhaps what we have here is more closely analogous to the relationship between empirical research and so-called "theories of the middle range" in the field of sociology. Sociologists often lament the wide gap between the work of the "nose-counters" and that of the brave generalizers; they would like to see the development of an area in between, in which scholars making solid use of the statistical information gathered by the empiricists could produce studies general enough to answer real social questions, yet sufficiently inductive in process, sufficiently grounded in hard facts, to carry authority.

The fact that humanistic scholars do not always build on one another's work strikes me as a more important failing than the more publicized fact that they sometimes ride critical hobby-horses, but the two are really rather closely related. A rocking horse winner around 1930, for example, was the Freudian approach. In the Poe literature the two major books which appeared around this time were, as one might expect,

Freudian studies of the man's work; both are, in their ways, very good books, though less carefully qualified than most recent psychological criticism. What strikes the modern reader about Joseph Wood Krutch's *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius* (New York, 1926) and Marie Bonaparte's *Edgar Poe: Etude Psychoanalytique*¹ is that they make the assumption that every word which came from Poe's pen carries the same weight as words coming from the mouth of a patient on the psychiatrist's couch. A great many of the things which Krutch and Bonaparte said then about Poe are probably true, but in the thirty years since these books appeared we have come to know a great deal about the career of Poe and about the process by which he produced his works.

Now if Poe studies were in fact cumulative in some sort of healthy way, one would expect that all work done between 1930 and 1960 would somehow be put to use in later volumes covering roughly the same ground. Of course, in selecting Poe as an example of a failure in our literary scholarship, I am to some extent loading the dice;² one could select figures for whom the record is not quite so black. Friends who are Shakespearian scholars tell me, for example, that the situation there is quite satisfactory; among American men of letters Hawthorne and Faulkner seem to me for the most part to have come closer to us as the volume of scholarship and criticism has increased, and I think this is largely because the scholars working in these areas have operated with honest respect for the work of their predecessors. There has been some good James scholarship from the start; the Melville literature varies in quality but certainly our knowledge of Melville is far more accurate today than it was in the early 1920s. So I will admit at the start that Poe's case is a bad one.

It is bad not because the Poe scholarship has been bad, but because it has not been cumulative. For example, a great turning point came—or should have come—in 1941, when the late Arthur Hobson Quinn published his important *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (New York, 1941), a work which clarified our biographical information. Professor Quinn established that the most spectacularly unsavory things we thought we knew about Poe were, if not untrue, at least highly doubtful. He explained in detail the manner in which the Reverend Rufus Griswold, Poe's literary executor, had warped evidence, changed passages, omitted

¹ (Paris, 1933) and *The Life and Work of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, tr. John Rodker (London, 1949).

² In another sense I am not loading them at all, for the Poe scholarship has involved foolishness from the outset. A good account of one phase of it is John Carl Miller's "Introduction" (xv-xlix) to the catalogue of the John Henry Ingram Poe Collection at the University of Virginia (Charlottesville, 1960).

words, distorted pertinent data and, in general, conducted a systematic smear campaign. More evidence of the same sort—evidence, that is, that the standard creepy portrait of Poe is based on less-than-reliable data—has come in since 1941. But essentially it is Quinn's great contribution to have told us that while we do not know that Poe was not addicted to alcohol, drugs or perversions, we certainly do not know that he was. No one has to my knowledge refuted any of Professor Quinn's basic assertions; one would have thought that his book would have been the end of all unqualified statements about Poe's worst behavior.³

Professor Quinn's book has its faults. It should not really have been called a critical biography; the criticism is distinguished chiefly by enthusiasm and today too much of it seems devoted to tilting against windmills. The nearly meaningless old chestnut, "Was Poe really American?" receives terribly dead-serious attention; the answer seems generally to be, Yes, because Poe uses here and there recognizable American settings.⁴ But limitations of this sort do not obviate the fact that Professor Quinn had given us a new way of looking at Poe, one so thoroughly grounded in firmly established information that one would have every right to assume that every scholar devoting himself to Poe after 1941 would begin with Quinn's facts and Quinn's explanations of what was not fact but conjecture.

From a totally different method of investigation there also came a large body of new information, this as nearly analogous to "pure" data as anything the literary scholar is ever liable to handle: the monumental labors of investigators working independently had turned up so many clearly identifiable sources for Poe's subject matter in his short stories that the casual scholar might have thought that Poe's creativity was simply a matter of scissors and glue pot. But curiously, for the most part, not even this kind of simple reaction appeared. No one drew the line, so to speak, under the column of data which was coming in and added it up. When even specialists fail to assess the significance of new work, pity the interdisciplinarian who needs information from several areas at once. As I

³ Bad behavior of a different sort, of course, we have plenty of evidence for. There is, for example, the matter of his plagiarism in a few cases, notably in *The Journal of Julius Rodman*. There are also a few well documented incidents, such as the famous Boston lecture, in which Poe made a terrible fool of himself. If one wishes to damn Poe there is ground enough on which to damn him without the help of the abnormal psychologist.

⁴ It is symptomatic of the frame of mind which produced this sort of judgment that in F. O. Matthiessen's *American Renaissance* (New York, 1941), Matthiessen refuses to discuss Poe, dismissing him in a half page on the grounds that he is not American enough to include in the book. Parrington had also dismissed him, saying that he was an appropriate subject for an abnormal psychologist or a belletrist, but not for an historian of American thought.

have suggested above, the trouble probably lies in the fact that we are not accustomed to thinking of information of this sort as cumulative. Taken cumulatively, what do these source studies say? They say that however we are to rank Poe as a creative artist, his contribution must be evaluated in terms of manner and not matter. This sounds so much like a critical truism that it deserves to be explained. From decades of source studies, we have learned that Poe, who turned to the short story because he could not make a living as a poet, had apparently a fairly commercial attitude toward the subject of his stories. He was highly familiar with the content of popular magazines of the day, kept files and check lists of plot types and subjects liable to sell, operated from a theory of creativity (perhaps rationalized after the fact) which laid heavy stress on "novelty," and does not seem to have done anything in the matter of his stories which had not been done before in popular or even hack work with which he was demonstrably familiar. What he did, in short, was to make an art form out of a second-rate sensational and subliterary genre.

Such a conclusion seems important enough to justify the patient labors of the authors of the numerous source studies, but there is an even more important conclusion to be drawn from their work. It tells us to qualify anything which we say about Poe's personality which is based solely on the content of his fiction. I do not mean to imply that Poe chose his subjects simply because they had appeared in popular magazines of the time and had sold. Obviously, he could have chosen other subjects. His choice of material which looks "sick" to us today must be in some ways psychologically meaningful. But we simply cannot assume that all of this can be read directly as a sort of psychical autobiography. If Professor Quinn's book tells us that we no longer knew for sure that Poe was depraved, the source studies, taken as a whole, show us just as conclusively that we no longer know the relationship of Poe's subject matter to his own psyche.

With the source studies to tell us that the subject matter of Poe's work is not a reliable index of his own mentality, and with Professor Quinn's work to tell us that the wild stories which we have heard about Poe are not reliable either, has Poe scholarship moved on? The sad fact is that for the most part it has not, and until 1963 the only thoroughly reliable major works on Poe were those which a nonspecialist would be least likely to consult, those which dealt with specialized topics. In 1958, for example, Patrick Quinn published *The French Face of Edgar Poe* (Carbondale, Ill., 1958), which attempted to account for the puzzlingly enthusiastic reaction of the French. The book is perhaps as valuable for its lucid and sane evaluation of Poe's works as for its discussion of what the French see in him, although what Patrick Quinn has to say on this score is valuable:

he concludes generally that the French like Poe because he is very good at what he does, and because a number of their writers held a similar world-view. The French symbolists recognized in Poe a kindred spirit because Poe, especially late in his life, seems to have been arriving at conclusions about the world and about creativity which are generally described with the unfortunate pejorative "occult."⁵

I believe that Professor Edward H. Davidson in his *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge, 1958) was attempting to demonstrate something comparable. Certainly he succeeded in indicating more philosophical unity in Poe's work and thinking than had previously been acknowledged. His book, however, was so mercilessly panned by reviewers for everything from faulty grammar to illogic that it has not had the impact among students of Poe which it merits.

Then there is the case of David M. Rein's book, *Edgar A. Poe: The Inner Pattern* (New York, 1960). This is a bright psychological reading of Poe. A great many of Professor Rein's conclusions about the relation of Poe's work to his biography are, in all probability, correct. It is a little dismaying, though, to find in a book written thirty years after the studies by Krutch and Bonaparte passages such as the following:

After the death of Morella, Poe, in the story gives himself a creature that he can love, a daughter. She is really Morella all over again—but with the maturity taken away. Was not Poe here confessing that he could love Virginia—but as a child, not as a woman; as a daughter, but not as a wife? (pp. 72-73)

That a scholar in 1960 could have reached such nakedly unqualified conclusions in spite of the implications of all the work done on Poe in the three decades following 1930 suggests how serious is the problem of communication. And if a specialist can be misled, how much more so an interdisciplinarian, even a very gifted one. The late Perry Miller told me playfully that he was sorry to see the drift of the Poe scholarship because now he would have to rewrite his splendidly dramatic lecture on Poe. He said that as recently as the mid-1950s he had been relying essentially on the older conception of Poe. In Rein's case, perhaps the difficulty is that he seems to rely upon the critical portions of two older biographical studies, Hervey Allen's *Israfel* (New York, 1934) and Arthur Hobson Quinn's. As indicated above, however valuable the Quinn is as a biog-

⁵ For a discussion of this matter, see the author's "In the Mystical Moist Night Air," *American Quarterly*, XIV (Summer 1962), 198-206; and Allan Tate's "The Angelic Imagination," in *The Man of Letters in the Modern World: Selected Essays, 1928-1955* (New York, 1955), pp. 113-31.

rathy, it is critically outmoded; Allen's book, because of important revelations contained in Quinn's, is simply outmoded.

Examples of this sort could be multiplied; they are unfortunate because the scholars involved clearly mean well and have something to contribute. That their studies do not build upon previous good work is sad but not scandalous. Indeed, it is not even entirely their fault. When nobody in the past has been "cumulative," when there is no place one can go to find out what has been the direction of work on a problem, it is probably a little unfair to expect each newcomer to the field to read everything in print before he takes his small step forward. One does not have to read a book on atomic physics published in the 1920s unless one is an historian of science; a book published in the 1960s will incorporate what was valid in the older study. What is scandalous is the deliberate perpetration of older slander, and this seems evident in a D. C. Heath casebook on Poe⁶ which presents students with some of Poe's poems, fiction and letters, and then assorted older documents—by James Russell Lowell, Nathaniel P. Willis, Charles Baudelaire, John J. Moran, Whitman, Rufus Griswold and Aldous Huxley. I do not object to the oversimplified critical argument ("He's a fraud" vs. "He's a genius"), but the presentation of the Griswold memoir without a clear statement by the editors of what modern scholarship knows about Griswold's slander is, to say the least, unfortunate. It is clear from the footnotes that the editors know Quinn's work, but unless the instructor teaching this text were a Poe specialist or had been warned to watch out for the Griswold hoax, he and his class would come away from *The Enigma* with the impression that some very dead issues were very much alive. Indeed, the more sophisticated the student or instructor, the more likely the error: the editors do include a section of John J. Moran's *A Defense of Edgar Allan Poe* which says that Griswold was a liar and an "avowed and personal enemy" of Poe, but Dr. Moran's plea is so sentimentalized and overwritten that any sensitive reader lacking the facts to which Quinn had access would automatically distrust it. It is one thing to encourage students to "make up their own minds," and quite another to pretend that a matter solidly settled by distinguished scholarship is still debatable. From its eerie cover on, this paperback reflects serious discredit upon its publisher, editors and the profession of scholarship.

Much more typical of the waste of critical talent is the contribution of a bright outsider, Harry Levin, whose *The Power of Blackness* (New York, 1958) opens with a graceful apology for the author's relative un-

⁶ *The Enigma of Poe*, eds. Warren V. Ober, Paul S. Burtress and William R. Seat Jr. (Boston, 1960).

familiarity with the world of nineteenth-century American letters. His work is an excellent introduction to the issues and problems in the works of our "black" writers, but I am afraid that his conclusions for the most part operate on the level of the intelligent undergraduate. I'm not sure that Professor Levin is aware of the extent to which his insights are truisms in American history and American literature courses. He is an extremely sensitive reader, and it is a tribute to the clarity of his mind that his section on Poe gets as far as it does. Had he only recognized that some of his conjectures were, if the evidence of the Poe scholarship means anything, practically established facts, his study could have carried the weight of considerable authority and have been far more definitive than it is.

A brief summary of all that is good and all that is bad in the Poe literature is provided by number four of Twayne's United States Author Series, in which Vincent Buranelli conscientiously attempts to brief the reader on what we know about Poe. Going, as nearly as I can make out, to the most reputable scholarly works available, Mr. Buranelli produces some eminently sane judgments: "If Poe's normal trademarks are being stressed too much today, it is an error on the right side. . ." (p. 19). "If he did not read comprehensively or exhaustively in the giants of literary criticism, he read enough in them or about them to learn about the concepts he needed" (p. 111). Statements of this sort are refreshing and well borne out by recent scholarship. But when the time comes to evaluate Poe's worth, Mr. Buranelli apparently goes not to the best of what Poe criticism we have, but rather to the same sources from which he gleaned his biographical information; the reader has perhaps by now concluded that those writers with the best feeling for Poe's biography have been for the most part the least useful as critics.⁷ I find it a little astonishing that in a work published in 1961 and purporting to be a general introduction to the best available information on Poe, statements such as the following appear: "[Poe has] a strong claim to the titles of our best poet, our best short story writer, and our best critic" (p. 129); "[Poe] is America's greatest writer and the American writer of greatest significance in world literature" (p. 133).

Here is evidence that the foolish boundary between traditional scholarship and the New Criticism is still standing. In effect, critics do not brief

⁷ Perhaps in fairness it would be better to say that they are not critics at all. A distinguished scholar such as Professor Quinn would really best have been called an admirer of Poe's writings, and perhaps Professor T. O. Mabbott, who is at work on a definitive edition of Poe's complete works, could best be described as a learned antiquarian. From correspondence with Mr. Mabbott and with those who have been in touch with him, I gather that, taken cumulatively, the new material he has on hand seems to support the more moderate view of Poe's biography.

themselves in the traditional scholarship; academics act as though they were frightened by sophisticated critical techniques. The curtain is as asinine as it is arbitrary. A good critic is obviously going to turn up material which is immediately useful and relevant to the literary historian. Similarly, the close reader who goes at the works of an author without familiarizing himself with the best scholarship is simply making extra work for himself.

It is pleasant to be able to report that there are of late signs of progress, although the Poe literature when compared to that surrounding almost any other major American author seems strangely backward. Contrast it, for example, with that dealing with Mark Twain: what a long way we seem to have come since 1920, the date of Van Wyck Brooks' *The Ordeal of Mark Twain!* And note that in Twain studies, the good work has come from all directions—we simply know so very much more about Twain's life that "ordealism," understood in any simple way, is an impossible position to hold. Similarly, we know so much more about the subtlety and craft of his art that simplistic "readings" must be qualified. The reaction against ordealism tended to overstress those elements in Twain's thinking which indicated his joyous wallowing in the materialism of his environment as much as the ordealists had overemphasized signs of disillusionment. But with time, it has become clear enough that the contradictions in Twain's attitudes on this and other issues simply cannot be resolved. Twain seems to have been capable of holding, with perfect sincerity, two obviously contradictory opinions on the same issue. We seem to be less troubled by contradictions, partially perhaps for the same reason that the word "paradox" is so fashionable in our criticism today, but partially also, I like to think, because we are nationally less self-conscious about the implications of an author's beliefs.

Well, the workaday side of Poe, too, is clearly in view. Perry Miller's *The Raven and the Whale* (New York, 1956) was a study of the rather snide and neurotic literary circles in New York from Poe's time through Melville's; more recently we have been given a more specialized work, one which deals explicitly with Poe's experience in the market place. This is Sidney P. Moss' *Poe's Literary Battles: The Critic in the Context of His Literary Milieu* (Durham, N.C., 1963). Mr. Moss assembles a great deal of information we have had for a long time and very lucidly points the connections between one thing and the next. He is especially good in accounting for the literary "puffing" to which Poe so vehemently objected, and to which he was himself on occasion forced to resort. A reading of Moss' book will still not convince the reader that Poe was not a jackass, but it will tend to make his behavior more readily comprehensible in

documentable terms—once again, we cannot document very much of Poe's supposedly morbid behavior, but as Moss demonstrates, we can document very well economic pressures and petty jealousies.

There is even better news. With the publication of Edward Wagenknecht's *Edgar Allan Poe: The Man Behind the Legend* (New York, 1963), we have for the first time a thoroughly reliable biographical study of Poe.⁸ Sanity, calmness and compassion are good qualities in a biographer, and Mr. Wagenknecht has them in abundance. There are readers, I am sure, who might object to the informality of certain passages, but they will be impressed by the thoroughness with which Mr. Wagenknecht has done his homework. Aware of all the issues, real and imaginary, with which students of Poe have busied themselves, he proceeds one by one to pass sensible judgments upon them. He lays to rest—I hope—the hoary question, "was Poe American?" as follows:

I should say that Poe believed in . . . the America of Washington and Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt, of Emerson, Whitman, and Mark Twain. It is true that he disbelieved in the inspiration and moral wisdom of the majority, saw Congress as a rabble in the Hudibrastic sense, denounced American materialism and dollar-chasing, suspected that democracy agreed better with talent than with genius, and took up a savage attitude toward political corruption under democracy. So did they. (p. 88)

If this is not a very strong judgment, at least it is one that can be documented, which is more than can be said of the opposite view. On the meaning of the presence of horror in Poe:

There is less out-and-out physical horror in Poe's tales than many readers suppose; he himself professed to find it offensive or disgusting except when "the severity and majesty of truth" was present to "sanctify and sustain" it. . . . (p. 55)

All his horrors can be paralleled and surpassed in contemporary writing; if he was mad, his whole generation was mad with him. (p. 57)

This not to say that Wagenknecht falls into the error of reacting so strongly against the more sensational readings of Poe's biography that he tries to hide Poe's undeniable peculiarity:

⁸ I do not mean to imply either that Arthur Hobson Quinn's book is biographically unreliable or that anything very startling has happened since 1941 to make his book obsolete. The book's critical portions and the disproportionate amount of space given to discussion of issues which are dead ends, however, tended to obscure for any reader but a specialist its very real importance.

. . . No study of Edgar Allan Poe, written in the year 1963, or, so far as can now be foreseen, in any future year, can possibly be complete or definitive. There is simply too much in his life that we do not know and too much that we do not understand. There is even—let us admit it frankly—too much that we cannot believe. (pp. 12-13)

As refreshing as his willingness to leave unanswerable questions about Poe's biography unanswered is his attitude toward some of the more puzzling pieces in the Poe canon. Some years ago, a group of critics tried to demonstrate that Poe was a great humorist; Professor Wagenknecht knows that what they really showed was that Poe had access to an established tradition of humor and tried, on the whole unsuccessfully (at least for the modern reader), to be funny. He also quotes, without trying to explain away, Poe's honest admission in a letter to Kennedy that he himself was not sure what he was up to in some of his tales.

Unlike many writers who have tried to understand Poe in more rational terms than those which prevailed during the currency of the Griswold hoax, Wagenknecht does not attempt to minimize Poe's undeniable fascination with mysticism. "That God may be all in all, each must become God" (p. 216), he quotes Poe as writing, and then adds, very accurately, ". . . and though they both foolishly failed to recognize it, Poe and the Emerson of "Self-Reliance" were, on this point, basically in accord" (p. 217). Harry M. Campbell has remarked⁹ that for Poe aesthetics is a kind of religion. So it is for any mystic author, and it must be said in favor of his disarmingly informal biographical study that Mr. Wagenknecht faces up honestly to those passages in Poe which have been most troubling to critics so committed to a rationalistic view of literature that they find it difficult to concede that there may have been Western authors who subscribed to other beliefs. Poe says, after all, that each individual intelligence must absorb all other intelligences, thus becoming one with the universe: this is occultism pure and simple. Pointing this out about Poe, of course, in no way domesticates him. It does, however, serve to put him clearly in context. He shared his world view and his view of the role of the artist with Shelley, with Emerson, with Blake and, for that matter, with Whitman.

Mr. Wagenknecht's method, then, generally is in the case of each problem to review the "hard" evidence which is available to us, to define carefully the areas which we do and do not know, and then to provide firm judgment when it is possible, or clearly labeled and always sensible hypothesis when it is not.

⁹ In a letter to the author.

The appearance of sound and thoughtful judgments in a book intended for a general audience is encouraging. We must hope that the non-specialist who wants to know about Poe's life will go to this and not some other book. (A bad popular biography came out at about the same time. Others will doubtless follow.) What is discouraging is that we have known all of Mr. Wagenknecht's facts for a good long time; we have simply failed to add them up. The evidence is also there to be used for anyone who can produce an over-all critical reading of Poe's works. I would say that at the present writing we have a good idea of Poe's place, but we have as of yet failed to establish conclusively his worth.

STUART LEVINE, *University of Kansas*

Early American Science¹

In his *Early American Science Needs and Opportunities for Study*, published in 1955, Whitfield J. Bell Jr. observes that "Perhaps biography is the first kind of study needed. . . . [T]he first thing students of early science in America must do is to learn who the men of science were and what they did" (pp. 11-12). During the past decade a number of historians, in full agreement with this statement, have attempted to present many men and their achievements in forms which are at times precisely and at times only roughly biographical. Some like I. Bernard Cohen have examined the achievements (like Franklin's in electricity) in forms only incidental to biography. Others, as did Joseph I. Waring in *A History of Medicine in South Carolina* (1964), have combined history, life sketches and scientific description. Samuel X. Radbill by editing *The Autobiographical Ana of Robley Dunglison, M.D.* (1963) presented a significant life and its achievements in the subject's own words. And Edmund and Dorothy Berkeley in *John Clayton, Pioneer of American Botany* (1963) have followed Bell's advice most precisely. These are a few of many.

But much yet remains to be done in this direction before a history of American science can be written which can show significances in proper proportions and be genuinely comprehensive. The three books here considered add appreciably to the materials the future general historian must employ. They represent in their format three slightly differing approaches, all of them useful.

¹ The following books are considered in this review: Brooke Hindle, *David Rittenhouse*, xiii, 394 pp. Princeton University Press, 1964. \$8.50; J. A. Leo Lemay, *Ebenezer Kinnersley, Franklin's Friend*. 143 pp. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964. \$4.00; and Silvio A. Bedini, *Early American Scientific Instruments and Their Makers*. xii, 184 pp. Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, 1964. \$1.00 [paper].

Brooke Hindle's *David Rittenhouse*, apparently growing out of the interest aroused in the author by his subject when he was writing his *Pursuit of Science in Revolutionary America 1735-1789*, is a major and perhaps definitive study by a scholar who knows a great deal about the milieu in which Rittenhouse worked and about the mechanical and theoretical-philosophical achievement of the man himself. From heredity through earliest craftsmanship in clocks through orrery and astronomical observations, to the years as public official and political liberal, Hindle plots Rittenhouse. The author implies that surviving personal materials, such as letters, are scant, and he really gives little direct evidence (though much by implication) of his subject's quiet modesty and charm. There are what appear to be somewhat sharp, certainly incisive—almost thrown-in—comments on some of Rittenhouse's friends at the expense of these friends' perspicacity, genuine friendliness or even, at times, integrity of intention, which without further evidence the reader must accept as fair. Here Virginian John Page as sophomoric, Jefferson as unwilling or incapable of following Rittenhouse into certain calculations, William Smith and John Ewing as assuming too much credit, or even as devious, are suggested or flatly portrayed. One concludes the volume with the feeling that here a major American scientist, perhaps second only to Franklin in distinction and second to none in his ability, has really been defined. In a discussion of Rittenhouse's 1775 oration before the American Philosophical Society the biographer seeks for "the meaning of David Rittenhouse," and he concludes that his subject was "the personification of the truth of science in harmonious combination with Christian humility and virtue." The oration itself would be sufficient to bear out all this, but Hindle's biography does much more. He presents his subject as a triumphant personification of American mechanical ingenuity, not in Log-Cabin-to-White-House but in Apprenticeship-to-Observatory tradition.

J. A. Leo Lemay's modest *Ebenezer Kinnersley, Franklin's Friend* takes up where I. Bernard Cohen and others have left off in their estimates of the man who was to Franklin what Huxley was to Darwin, and just a little more. This monograph pretty completely surveys the Philadelphia Baptist's clerical, experimental and educational career, quietly correcting previous commentators where necessary, and differentiating distinctly between the electrical achievements of Franklin as master and Kinnersley as disciple, with special care being taken to disabuse the reader of any illusion that Kinnersley was the real master. This is a sound, clearly written, first book-length study by a young man who should be heard from frequently in the future—on many phases of the colonial mind.

Silvio A. Bedini's *Early American Scientific Instruments and Their Makers* contains scores of useful illustrations, sketches of individual mechanic-craftsmen-scientists, and histories of various types of interests, as well as descriptions of various types of instruments. Bedini points out that the majority of the craftsmen who came to the United States after the Revolution came to Philadelphia and worked there, but he also finds that most of the early American instrument makers were native born and spread through the colonies, especially through the northern and middle territories. His appendices of names, instruments and locations will be useful. This little volume will be a necessary reference book for any student of early mechanical craftsmanship in this country.

RICHARD BEALE DAVIS, *The University of Tennessee*

Fiction and Society¹

PLACED in the order given below, these books represent a graduation from positive to negative for students of American culture. Mr. Stone's book has two parts, stemming from somewhat different impulses. In the first, he is impelled by Maxwell Geismar's *Henry James and the Jacobites* (1963) to explore the century-long controversy over James' work, with particular attention to the question of whether, as Geismar charges, certain people instinctively cling, in "the epoch of Cold War [and] McCarthyism" to James as a symbol of propriety and safety. Is James, then, a refuge from social issues? Mr. Stone establishes that James was no thinker, that he did not really care about business, politics, psychology or philosophy, although he deeply respected the latter, and (turning to the arts) that he disliked bald realism and repeatedly claimed that art could invent better-than-real people. "If the life about us" cannot match such inventions, he said, "so much the worse for that life." Edith Wharton asked him how he dared restrict the characters in *The Golden Bowl* to watching and fencing with each other, leaving them stripped "of all the *human fringes* we necessarily trail after us through life?" Stuart P. Sherman praised him for offering something "a thousandfold better than life . . . an escape from the undiscriminated into the finely assorted," out of religion, morality and truth and into pure beauty. The moral question, however, has engaged most commentators. If F. R. Leavis

¹ The following books are considered in this review: Edward Stone, *The Battle and the Books: Some Aspects of Henry James*. xii, 234 pp. Ohio University Press, 1964. \$5.00; Robert L. Gale, *The Caught Image: Figurative Language in the Fiction of Henry James*. xiv, 266 pp. University of North Carolina Press, 1964. \$6.00; and Laurence Holland, *The Expense of Vision: Essays on the Craft of Henry James*. xvi, 414 pp. Princeton University Press, 1964. \$8.50.

can wittily remark that we have, "in reading him, a sense that important choices are in question and that our finest discrimination is being challenged, while at the same time we can't easily produce for discussion any issues that have moral substance to correspond," others have taken a stand. The liberals perhaps *tend* to condemn his aesthetic of sensibility, whereas the more conservative *tend* to find a higher morality in the complexity and subtlety of his vision. But we must underline *tend* because Mr. Stone documents a very wide range of variance from this formulation. He reduces Geismar's attack to the equation of James idolatry with the groping for a political security by frightened people in a McCarthy era. He disproves the charge by showing 1) that James is full of social insights, and 2) that many of the strongest left-wingers among American intellectuals have been lovers of James at the same time. Valuable bibliographical aid for students of cultural history may be balanced by a considerable Jamesian difficulty of style.

Mr. Gale's work is a systematic and comprehensive classification of James' imagery in *all* his work. This tremendous job of description and classification may be invaluable as a concordance for future students of James.

Laurence Holland's long study of James seems to be deeply concerned with the transaction between the artist and the work. The Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* he interprets to contain a metaphorical counter-statement to its literal theme. When revealed, it shows as a "conscience-stricken inquiry into the deepest implications of James's craft." The book is so difficult to read that one may emerge from a long paragraph flushed with sweat and triumph but unable to say what he has read. The complex, three-dimensional transaction assumed to be taking place among author, book and reader—with Isabel Archer sitting and learning something in the middle of the "ado" generated about her—is not easy to grasp. Social meanings are intimated when the author writes that "In *The Portrait of a Lady*, the plot proves to reveal the form not only of its author's mediation but of the novel's social and aesthetic implications as well" (p. 15), but when such promises of insights into the novel's "place in American literature" are fulfilled, they come as assertions that the descriptions of Osmond planning to mold Isabel to his will are symbols or images of James working with the materials of his story. And when the promised explorations of social institutions take form, they do so in sentences so abstract that (so far as I understand them at all) they could apply equally well to a thousand other novels. For example, "For the *Portrait* reveals in the institution [of marriage] the principal functions of a form: the capacity to sustain a fully developed relation-

ship; but also the capacity to precede the full development of a process or experience while yet prefiguring it, and thus to shape the plans and aspirations for personal and social experience, to embody emerging possibilities as well as actual achievements; and the capacity to survive the process or experience itself, remaining a skeletal but nonetheless real image of possibilities no longer (or not yet again) actual." (p. 41) How the "form" of marriage "sustains" and yet "prefigures" the "full development of a process or experience" and "shapes the plans and aspirations" while remaining a "skeletal image" of "possibilities no longer actual" escapes my most strenuous efforts to make it concretely apply to the novel. It is not surprising, on this level of abstraction, to discover that the barren marriage between Chillingworth and Hester Prynne is a model for the relation between Osmond and Isabel! (p. 26) Metaphor, antithesis and abstraction continually smother the small fire of meaning. The concluding sentence of the long section on the marriage tells us that "Isabel . . . is made a victim of her world (including her own temperament and illusions) and of the *Portrait* which creates and paints her." To say that the heroine is the victim of the book in which she appears is to tear language loose from all reference.

I think there are profound social implications in the way that the ideal of the detached, objective author like James or Joyce has brought layer upon layer of ambiguity because few readers can agree on what *The Golden Bowl* or *A Portrait of the Artist* says, with all its lucid objectivity of style. The characters slip through our fingers because the authors are so busy being objective that they will not define clearly the moral issues those characters face. If we don't know what choice a character faces, we cannot judge his choice, and we simply do not know what he is. Thus by a strange process of life copying art the ideal of objectivity leads to the aimless anti-hero who un-wallows among un-choices in an un-world he never un-made. And a generation later the critics are making a fashion of irresponsible ambiguity, writing books which are creative experiences for their dazzled readers.

CHARLES CHILD WALCUTT, *Queens College*

ROBERT S. GOLD, *A Jazz Lexicon*. xxvi, 363 pp. Alfred A. Knopf, 1964.
\$5.95.

THIS is the first comprehensive and scholarly attempt at a dictionary of jazz terms, and it is a very good one. Mr. Gold has drawn from a wide range of printed materials and has also interviewed musicians. (It would

have been helpful if he had named his informants more often; it is my impression that he depended far too heavily on a single musician—Eubie Blake—for many terms current before 1935.)

Given the paucity and unreliability of previous work in the field, it is almost inevitable that there should be many omissions and errors. For example, "preaching" (as in "preaching cornet" and "preaching the blues") is not listed. Nor is "twist," although it has been applied to various shaking jazz dances since the 1920s, and perhaps earlier. And "an earthy, sorrowful blues style on the piano" is not "the only meaning" of "the fives"; Jimmy Yancey applied that name to his fastest and most joyful boogie-woogie piece.

Mr. Gold's most serious faults are a tendency to accept folk etymologies at face value (for example, under "scat" and "boots on"), and a curious inaccuracy in dating currency. Many terms were in common use much earlier than the date he gives, and many others which he lists as obsolete or rare are still in common use among older musicians.

Nevertheless, *A Jazz Lexicon* is generally far more reliable than not, and is likely to be superseded only when the rapid rate of change in the language itself makes a new book-length study necessary.

CHADWICK HANSEN, *Pennsylvania State University*

JOHN W. McCoubrey, *American Tradition in Painting*. 128 pp. George Braziller, 1963. \$4.95.

THIS is a disturbing, controversial, occasionally penetrating and teasingly slight book. I suspect that it is a book that many professional art historians may choose to ignore or disparage. The student of American culture, however, will find that it alludes to some central and perplexing concerns. This is not to say that the author resolves them to the agreement or satisfaction of everyone engaged in American Studies. But even in disagreement, partial or complete, they will learn that a serious reading suggests the urgency of reexamining some basic problems.

One of these concerns, a pervasive consideration throughout the book, is an attempt to come to terms with the unique meanings of the "American experience" and to discuss its manifestations in American painting. Theoretically, then, the author is interested in defining the essential "American-ness" of American painting.

In his introduction and first chapter ("The Colonial Portrait"), Professor McCoubrey is obscure and theoretically shaky when he insists upon referring to a painting's "American intention" or when he seems to equate the "American" in art with "untutored arrangement" and "scat-

tered patterns." He is, however, lucid, perceptive, and immeasurably suggestive when he has his eye on the object. His comparative study of a painting by Pierre Soulages and Franz Kline, for example, illustrates his analytical powers and the insights to be gained from this procedure. Three chapters ("The Landscape," "The Figure in Space," "The Eight and After") reflect, again, his strengths and weaknesses; his analytical precision and sensitiveness and his theoretical fumbling and uncertainty. This section does manage to give the reader a slightly more developed sense of the book's argument without necessarily succeeding in convincing him of its validity. The final chapter ("The New Image") permits the author still another opportunity to discuss various themes: his conception of "American space," the problems in painting "the reality of American experience," and of the continuation of the "unique tension of American painting." A great deal of the ambiguity and murkiness of the discussion in this crucial chapter, as indeed in some of the earlier ones, rests with his undiscriminating use of the concept of "realism" in general and of "American realism" in particular.

The book's value is enhanced by its 68 plates which serve as a point of departure for the analyses; it is marred by several typographical errors. I hope the author will think of this book as a pilot-study for a more detailed and persuasive work. It could be a major contribution to our understanding and feeling for the sweep of American painting and, indirectly, the study of American culture.

JOSEPH J. KWIAT, *University of Minnesota*

WILLIAM GREENLEAF, *From These Beginnings: The Early Philanthropies of Henry and Edsel Ford, 1911-1936.* vi, 236 pp. Wayne State University Press, 1964. \$7.95.

MIRA WILKINS AND FRANK ERNEST HILL, *American Business Abroad: Ford on Six Continents.* xiv, 543 pp. Wayne State University Press, 1964. \$10.00.

THESE two books bring together information about an American business enterprise that obviously transcends any parochial or regional interest. Both books demonstrate the use of research techniques that will interest American Studies scholars. Based primarily on private papers found in the archives of the Ford Company, both books use various government documents, popular periodicals, trade journals and bulletins as well as more conventional sources. Wilkins and Hill in *American Business Abroad* also use oral history, minutes of board meetings, annual reports and even foreign trade journals.

Of the two books, most readers will find Greenleaf's study of early Ford philanthropies the more interesting. Stopping abruptly with the establishment of the Ford Foundation in 1936, Greenleaf perceptively analyzes the motives that prompted Henry Ford to give millions of dollars to various philanthropic ventures that were designed on Ford's insistence "to help his fellow man to help himself." Only one chapter is devoted to Edsel Ford; the rest of the book concentrates on the elder Ford and in so doing juxtaposes two opposing sets of values that John A. Kouwenhoven has identified as those of the vernacular and cultivated traditions. Committed to the gospel of work and opposed to philanthropy as commonly understood, Ford, though a product of his agrarian background, also helped to popularize certain values apparently inherent in an industrialized, urban society that he himself helped to create. Two of the ventures Ford subsidized illustrate this conflict. One was the research that preceded the building of the Ford Hospital where "no doctrine, no theory, no tradition" was "too sacred or too venerable to uproot" if it did not meet the requirements of maximum comfort, convenience and utility—all values associated with twentieth-century machine production. The other venture is the historical village and museum Ford built at Dearborn "to teach by example the pioneer virtues of independence and hard work" and to encourage the rebirth of "old rural values" that Ford hoped to perpetuate in the industrialized society of the twentieth century.

Allan Nevins has said that *American Business Abroad* is "probably the best account of an American economic enterprise, or set of enterprises, abroad, ever written." Even so, this book will appeal to a small audience. Too often the book seems cluttered with names of executives, sales managers and clerks who allegedly played "crucial roles in Ford's foreign operation," but we are not told always what specific acts these men took that shaped the particular overseas venture. One can understand that these men must have had "shrewd business sense, great industry, and likeable personalities," but most readers will want to know more specifically what they did to alter Dearborn policy to meet local demands. The book does, of course, make a contribution to American and world economic history by outlining sixty years of Ford Company activity which typically followed a line of development from "selling to assembly to manufacturing" sturdy and dependable cars that were cheap to operate. It demonstrates, too, how the Ford Company met foreign competition and adjusted its policy in peace and in war to accommodate nationalistic tariff and trade policies, eventually resulting in an increase in total Ford products sold at home and abroad.

JOHN HOVE, *North Dakota State University*

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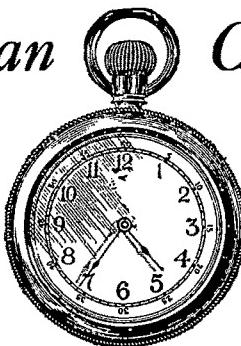
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American Calendar

Spring



1965

OFFICERS. The Executive Council of the American Studies Association met in New York on December 27 and elected the following slate of national officers for 1965: Russel B. Nye, Michigan State University, president; John Hope Franklin, University of Chicago, vice president; Allen Guttmann, Amherst College, treasurer; Robert F. Lucid, University of Pennsylvania, executive secretary; and Donald N. Koster, Adelphi College, bibliographer. Walter Blair, University of Chicago, was elected member-at-large. Chairman of the nomination committee was Edgar P. Richardson, Winterthur Museum. . . . The Council ratified the results of two regional elections: J. C. Levenson, University of Minnesota, Mississippi Valley region councilman; and Thomas F. Marshall, Kent State University, Great Lakes region councilman. Further, the Council ratified the appointment of the following editorial board for *American Quarterly*: John C. Gerber, University of Iowa (second

two-year term); William G. McLoughlin, Brown University (second two-year term); Ihab H. Hassan, Wesleyan University (first term); Arnold Rose, University of Minnesota (first term); Edmund S. Morgan, Yale University (first term); and Merton Sealts, Lawrence University (first term).

COUNCIL MEETING. Copies of the minutes of the Council have been mailed to all national and chapter officers, and may be had from the national office or, in limited supply, from the chapter secretaries, upon request. A newsletter analytic of the meeting will be mailed to the membership prior to the next issue of *AQ*.

SPEECH. On December 28, at Chicago, ASA held a joint session with the Speech Association of America. Under the chairmanship of Ernest J. Wrage, University of California, Berkeley, a panel analyzed the topic "Race, Communication, and the Human Community." The panel

consisted of the following members: LeRone Bennett Jr., *Ebony* magazine; Edwin C. Berry, Chicago Urban League; Hugh Duncan, Southern Illinois University; Raymond W. Mack, Northwestern University; H. Hardy Perritt, Miles College.

MLA. ASA sponsored a section at the Modern Language Association meeting in New York on December 28. Under the general heading "Right Form for American Studies?" four papers devoted to curricular problems were delivered: "The Undergraduate Major," Norman Holmes Pearson, Yale University; "The Undergraduate Minor," George Arms, University of New Mexico; "The Inter-Departmental Program," Willard Thorp, Princeton University; and "The Graduate Program," Albert E. Stone Jr., Emory University. Louis J. Budd, Duke University, was chairman of the section. . . . A joint luncheon on the same day, sponsored by ASA and the American Literature Group, honored Jay Hubbell, who was presented with the group's first Jay Hubbell Award medal, an honor to be conferred periodically in the future on scholars and editors of distinction in the area of American letters. Lewis Leary, Columbia University, presided.

AHA. On December 30, in Washington, ASA held a joint session with the American Historical Association. Under the chairmanship of Brooke Hindle, New York Uni-

versity, the session considered the general topic "Words Versus Things in American Studies," and featured the following papers: "Words or Things in the History of American Science," A. Hunter Dupree, University of California, Berkeley; and "Words or Things in American Religious History," Robert T. Handy, Union Theological Seminary. Discussants were Marshall W. Fishwick, Wemyss Foundation, and Anthony N. B. Garvan, University of Pennsylvania.

CHAPTER NEWS. The Metropolitan Chapter held a December 4 meeting at Cooper Union. A symposium on the future of the city, the meeting addressed the theme, "A Changing City in a Changing World," and featured three speakers: James Marston Fitch, Columbia University, "The Impact of New Technology on Architecture"; Frances Piven, Columbia University, "The Impact of Social Change"; and Richard Bender, Cooper Union, "The Effect of These Forces on the Future Form of the City." The session's moderator was Esmond Shaw, Cooper Union, and closing remarks were delivered by Sidney Ditzion, Chapter secretary. Richard S. Bowman, Cooper Union, was program chairman. . . . The Metropolitan Chapter also was host to a social hour held at the Modern Language Association meeting December 28. During the two-hour reception over

one hundred ASA members from around the country took the opportunity to meet national and chapter officers and each other. . . . The Texas Chapter held a meeting December 5 at Lamar State College in Beaumont. Chaired by Ralph A. Wooster, Lamar State, and Joe Ericson, Stephen F. Austin State College, the meeting included morning and afternoon sessions and a luncheon. The luncheon, presided over by ASA councilman for the south John Q. Anderson, Texas A. & M. University, was addressed by Philip C. Ritterbush, Smithsonian Institution, on "The Sorcerer's Apprentice: Science and American Society." The overall theme was "Science and American Life," and the following papers were presented: "Western Exploration as a Scientific Activity," William Goetzman, University of Texas; "Anna Hempstead Branch and the 'Delimitation of Supernaturalism,'" Lloyd C. Taylor Jr., Texas A. & M.; "Model Making for Authors," Gordon Mills, University of Texas; "Acceptance and Rejection of Science by Poe and Hawthorne," Carroll D. Laverty, Texas A. & M.; "Science and Art in the 20th Century: The Double Career of William Carlos Williams," Joseph Slate, University of Texas; "Background of Relative Theory," Lloyd S. Swenson Jr., University of Houston. David Van Tassel, Chapter president, was program chairman. Other officers elected at the meeting were: Dwight Dorough, University of Houston, vice president; Charles W. Hagelman Jr., Lamar State College, secretary; and John Q. Anderson, Leonard A. Duce, Trinity University and Donald Weisman, University of Texas, councilors. . . . The Chesapeake Chapter held a meeting on December 5 at the Columbia Historical Society in Washington, D. C. Constance McLaughlin Green spoke on "The American Image of Washington," and a tour of the Society followed. . . . The Northern California Chapter met November 24 at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, and was addressed by Ralph W. Tyler, Director of the Center, on "The Frontiers of Knowledge in the Behavioral Sciences Today."

AQ AWARD. *American Quarterly* has begun a program of annual awards for the article published in its covers which best exemplifies the stated aim of the publication: "to aid in giving a sense of direction to studies in the culture of the United States, past and present." The award committee, chaired this year by Arnold Sio, Colgate University, awarded the prize of \$200 to Warren I. Susman, Rutgers University, for his "History and the American Intellectual: Uses of a Usable Past." The article originally appeared in the Summer 1964 number.

ACLS. A Carnegie Corporation and Ford Foundation grant of \$3,100,000 has been made to the American Council of Learned Societies to be

administered in a five-year program in Western Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, beginning in 1966, to advance research on some aspect of the civilization of the United States. This new grant represents an expansion of the ACLS program to support American Studies at the university level in Western Europe. The conditions for the fellowships can be obtained by writing to ACLS at 345 East 46th Street, New York City or, in Japan, by writing to Professor John D. Goheen, who is visiting lecturer in philosophy at the University of Kyoto. In general, the awards are intended for university level teachers who are natives of the countries concerned and who can spend at least an academic year in the United States. Under certain circumstances assistance is also available to institutions in the countries concerned.

WASH. STATE. *Research Studies, a Quarterly Publication of Washington State University* in December 1964 published an American Studies number. Available at \$1.75 from Washington State University, Pullman, Wash., it contains "Faith as a Tendency to Action," Ellwood Johnson; "Early American Views of Coleridge as Poet," Carol L. Bagley; "Salmon P. Chase: The Chief Justice as Politician," Michael Malone; "Joaquin Miller on the Passing of the Old West," Lewis E. Buchanan; "The Damnation of Theron Ware and Elmer Gantry," Charles V. Genthe;

"Frank Lloyd Wright: American Prophet," J. Meredith Neil; and "James Stevens: The Laborer and Literature," Warren L. Clare.

A. S. PROGRAMS. The national office is collecting information on American Studies programs in the United States. This data is to be used for the annual summer report in *AQ* and in a larger plan to update the Walker *Report* of 1958. Members who have knowledge of the existence of or changes in an American Studies program in the United States which seems not to have been noticed by our survey, please pass the information on to the Executive Secretary.

WEMYSS. The two most recent papers concerning American Studies in the United States published by the Wemyss Foundation are: "Improving Humanistic Education," Francis H. Horn, University of Rhode Island, and "The Interaction of Asia and America: A Problem in Communication," James M. McCutcheon, of the University of Hawaii's East-West Center. The Foundation also awarded student memberships in ASA to two outstanding students from each of four institutions. At Princeton University, student memberships were awarded to Burton Bledstein and William Leary; at Lafayette College memberships went to Roger Kopf and Joseph Steinhardt; at the University of Wyoming memberships went to Stephen Leonard and Taylor Alderman; and at the

University of Delaware memberships were given to Craighill Burks and Jean A. Wheeler. Mr. Burks, also principal of the McLean High School, McLean, Virginia, has been appointed Summer Research Director for the Wemyss Foundation, where his interest in American Studies programs at the secondary school level led him to propose, recently, that a survey be launched to investigate the existence of and potential for American Studies in high schools. Interested members should contact Mr. Burks at the Wemyss Foundation, 200 W. Ninth Street, Wilmington, Del.

AWARDS. The deadline for ACLS Grants for Summer Aid in Linguistics is March 15, 1965. . . . On March 1 applications must be in for the American Numismatic Society grants-in-aid of \$600 to be used by humanists to attend the Society Seminar in New York City, June 15-August 21. The Society is at Broadway between 155th and 156th, New York City. Further, the Society will award a limited number of \$2,000 fellowships to graduate students who have completed course work, are at work upon dissertations, and who have attended a Society Seminar. Fellowship candidates must be nominated by deans of graduate schools — individual students may not apply. . . . The National Trust for Historic Preservation has twelve fellowships and openings for six non-fellows to attend a Seminar for Historical Ad-

ministrators June 13-July 23, 1965, in Williamsburg, Virginia. Each fellowship of \$450 will be for students with one year's graduate study in American history, American studies, American art and architectural history, or allied fields. Write National Trust, 817 17th St. N. W., Washington, D. C. Deadline: March 15. . . . The Committee on Library of the American Philosophical Society announces that in 1964-65 modest grants for research in American Indian ethno-history and in American Indian linguistics will again be offered to qualified applicants. Graduate students are eligible. Write to the Librarian, American Philosophical Society, 105 S. 5th St., Philadelphia, Penna. . . . Eight fellowships of \$1,200 are available for post-doctoral faculty members working on publishable papers in the humanities dealing with religion. For information write to the Weil Institute, 3101 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio. The deadline is September 1, 1965.

IN BRIEF. On May 14-15, 1965, the Purdue University English Department will sponsor a Mid-America Conference on Literature, History, Popular Culture and Folklore. Persons interested in attending should write to Ray B. Browne, English Department, Purdue, Lafayette, Ind. . . . Congressional Hearings are now being held on the several bills for a Federal Humanities Foundation, and a line to a

congressman or to the president is appropriate. . . . The seminar which started the American Studies Association of the Philippines, described last issue in "American Calendar," was organized by Dr. Carl David Mead, Michigan State University, who was the seminar's principal lecturer and who now constitutes a kind of unofficial representation of the Association in the United States. . . . A new, cross-disciplinary publication is due for fall publication. The *Michigan Quarterly Review*, located at 4010 Administration Bldg., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, edited by Sheridan W. Baker Jr., is billed as a quarterly of "University Perspectives and General Intelligence." *Book Review Index*, a new monthly guide to reviews appearing in more than four hundred review media, began publication in January, 1965. *American Quarterly* is among the publications indexed. . . . The Committee on American Studies of the Committee on International Exchange of Persons of the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils publishes "American Studies News," a comprehensive newsletter sent to all members of ASA, and the publication contains full lists of Fulbright-Hays and ACLS awards. It is therefore possible for "American Calendar" to devote its space to other matters, and readers concerned with the names of fellows and the topics for which grants were awarded are referred to "American Studies News." R. F. L.

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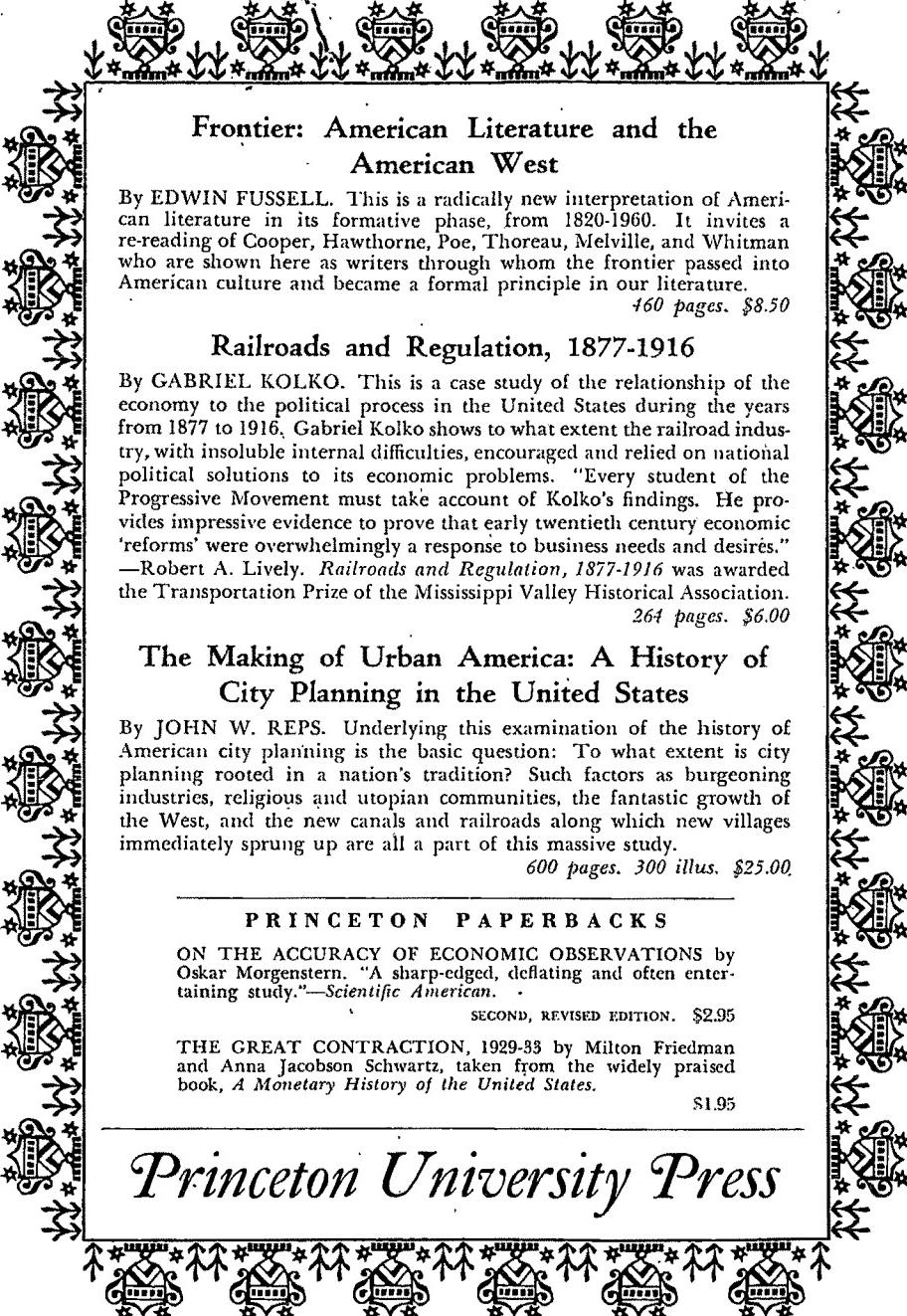
The Supervising Committee of the English Institute reserves the right to award no prizes if, in its judgement, none of the essays is of sufficient quality.



For further information write Professor R. W. B. Lewis at the address above.

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Character

JOHN S. KIRSCHNER Henry A. Wallace as Farm Editor

WILLIAM L. O'NEILL Divorce in the Progressive Era

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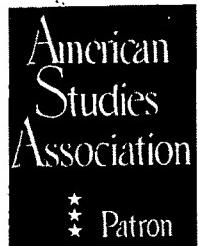
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WILLIAM G. McLOUGHLIN
Brown University

Pietism and the American Character¹

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ESSAY IS TO OFFER A PERSONAL HYPOTHESIS FOR WHAT may be unique, if anything is, about the American character. And if I can demonstrate that the quality of pietism (or, in its broader formulation, pietistic-perfectionism) offers at least as many useful insights into the nature of the American experience as, say, the quality of pragmatism or of democratic liberalism or the influence of the frontier, then I will have made my point. While I am aware that in offering such a "key" I am in danger of explaining so much as to explain nothing, I prefer to leave the inevitable qualifications and exceptions to another time. I will say for this generalized approach only that the present stage in the renascence of the history of religion² in America seems to me to merit its consideration.

American pietism had its origin in the protest of Protestantism against the ecclesiastical corruptions of the Christian church in the sixteenth century. Ernst Troeltsch, the German historian of religion, defined this dissenting spirit in terms of the sect-type versus the church-type of Christianity. And he listed as the salient features of the pietistic temper, its anti-institutionalism, its voluntarism, its exaltation of the individual's direct relationship with God, its aspiration "after personal inward perfection," its hostility to worldliness and the kinds of compromise which the established church-type systems have to make with the state, and its doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. Pietism, said Troeltsch, disliked

¹ This paper was read at the annual meeting of the New England American Studies Association at Amherst College, October 24, 1964.

² I use the term "religion" here not only in its narrow sense but in the broader sense as defined by J. L. Talmon: "The concrete elements of history, the acts of politicians, the aspirations of people, the ideas, values, preferences and prejudices of an age, are the outward manifestations of its religion in the widest sense." *The Rise of Totalitarian Democracy* (Boston, 1952), p. 11.

the relativistic aspects of the natural law as taught by the medieval scholastics, and substituted for it "the plain Law of Christ or the Sermon on the Mount." To the pietist, "God's Being and Will constitute His Natural and Revealed Law; the Bible is the Law-book of revelation, identical with the Law-book of Nature."³

Troeltsch pointed out that there were several types of pietism, and he made a sharp distinction between the mystical or quietistic pietism of Continental Europe and the activistic, aggressive, reform-minded temper of English Puritanism. The mystical pietism of the Continent left the world up to the State and so tended to remain static and agrarian; it was a religion of withdrawal. The activistic pietism of the Puritans gave to the Church the duty of reforming the world and so launched into liberalism in politics and capitalism in economics; it was a religion of commitment. Puritan pietism in England took many forms, but all of them (including the Separatist, Baptist and Quaker varieties which played so important a role in America) were animated by perfectionist ideals:

Its 'Perfectionist' aim of separating 'converted' Christians . . . from the rest in order to form them into smaller groups of real Christians, its stress on the need for 'converted' preachers, its emphasis upon lay religion and upon the pure apostolic primitive Church, revealed a spirit which was still inwardly hostile to the spirit of ecclesiasticism . . . the greatest impulse towards reform lay in the idea of the coming Kingdom of God and the approaching world transformation.⁴

As H. Richard Niebuhr put it in *Christ and Culture*, American Puritans, Separatists, Quakers, Methodists and Baptists believed in Christ as "the transformer of culture" and "as the regenerator of man in his culture."⁵

Now my hypothesis (and I want to make it clear that it is mine only as a gloss upon that other seminal work of Niebuhr's, *The Kingdom of God in America*) rests upon the contention that it was this dynamic, sectarian form of pietistic-perfectionism which lies at the basis of American civilization, although since 1776 the orthodox Christian version of this pietism has been challenged by various post-Christian versions. From the beginning of our history the New World attracted those who shared the basic assumptions of this outlook and who crossed the ocean in a quest for a new start, a more complete freedom, in a land where perfection itself seemed possible. Frederick Jackson Turner no doubt exaggerated the environmental contribution when he talked of American democracy's

³ Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon (London, 1931), I, 344, 347; II, 677 ff.

⁴ *Ibid.*, II, 716.

⁵ H. R. Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York, 1951), p. 220.

coming out of the forest to greet and transform the immigrant. But he was correct in seeing the virgin land and uncorrupted social order as a prime catalytic agent in shaping the pietistic-perfectionism brought by the immigrant, into genuinely new and different institutional forms.

It was not the forest or the free land, however, which broke down those remnants of the European civilization which the pietists brought with them. What broke down the stratified class system, the established church, the mercantile economic practices, the corporate concept of society, was the internal dynamic of pietistic-perfectionism itself. For there is an inherent tension within pietism, as well as between the varieties of pietism that came to America, which has generated a continual spirit of reformation, a constant search for a more perfect union between God and man in America from the outset. As Richard Niebuhr pointed out in 1937, and as Edmund S. Morgan recently emphasized in *The Puritan Dilemma*, this inherent tension or conflict within the pietistic-perfectionist outlook may be phrased (as Niebuhr generally put it) in terms of the conflict between the Puritan and the Quaker or (as Professor Morgan put it) between the Non-Separatist Congregationalist and the Separatist. For my purposes it is clearer to see it as a conflict between the conservative and the antinomian aspects of pietism—between those whose primary concern is to maintain perfect moral order and those whose primary concern is to attain perfect moral freedom. This tension was central to the attempt to found a nation dedicated to the proposition that the moral law of God and Nature is supreme, and that all men owe their first and fundamental allegiance to that law rather than to their families, their community or to the state. And the dilemma posed for the pietists who sought to construct the New Jerusalem in America's green and promised land had two sides: first, how do I get myself into harmony with the moral law, and second, how do I translate that law into action without curtailing the freedom of others? Or, in other words, the dilemma of personal responsibility for purity and social responsibility for order, for transforming myself and my society into that state of perfection which God requires on earth even as it is in heaven.

The pietistic dilemma was posed in classic terms by the confrontations which Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams posed to John Winthrop and John Cotton: Hutchinson, the antinomian true to the Spirit of God within her heart, and Williams, the Separatist and Seeker for absolute conformity to God's law, both refused to compromise with the Non-Separatist and restrictive regulations of the Bible Commonwealth, which, as they saw it, enforced conformity to a corrupt social and ecclesiastical order. The solution to such pietistic confrontations was simple in the 1630s. Williams and Hutchinson, and those who rebelled with them,

simply were told that if they did not like the civilization of Massachusetts Bay they could make their own lively experiment in pietistic-perfectionism in the wilderness. For two and a half centuries thereafter a host of antinomian pietists in America continually moved out to the greater freedom of the frontier whenever, like Natty Bumppo or Huck Finn, they felt the restrictions of civilization encroaching upon their moral freedom.

But not all of them moved. By the end of the seventeenth century the Quakers and Baptists had broken down the rigid exclusionist conformity of the religious establishments North and South and maintained their uncompromising attitudes toward a corrupt system in a mild state of siege called toleration. For more than a century the two wings of American pietism remained in constant tension over their differing views of a Christian society. The conservative pietists insisted, for example, that a Christian state required some official recognition of and support for the Christian churches. The Separatists, led by the Baptists, argued that for the state to support Christianity, even by a general assessment tax which aided all Protestant denominations, was infringing upon the freedom of the churches and of the individual conscience. And the Baptists repeatedly refused to obey the laws in this matter. Eventually the conservatives yielded the point, though not without first claiming that the supporters of disestablishment were subversives, agents of the Bavarian Illuminati, seeking to overthrow republican government in order to set up Jacobinical atheism and mob rule.

It is a basic difference between European and American civilizations that disestablishment was not engineered in this country by atheistic *philosophes* shouting "*Écrasez l'infâme!*" but by evangelical pietists shouting "Freedom of religion!" The defenders of the establishment, like Lyman Beecher, eventually realized to their great surprise, that disestablishment had been undertaken to free America *for* religion and not *from* religion. By the middle of the nineteenth century Roman Catholics in America recognized too the great benefits which derived to their church from the principle of separation of Church and State, though Cardinal Gibbons had to explain again and again to a puzzled Vatican that disestablishment was not secularism in the European sense.

Apart from the tensions over disestablishment, the two wings of pietism (Puritan and Separatist, or Conservative and Antinomian) which constituted the vital core of the American temper, managed to work together toward the implementation of their mutual ideals. Together they fought against the outworn, corrupt, man-made restrictions upon freedom which were associated with the decadent civilization and corrupt churches of the Old World. Having thrown off the shackles of an Erastian, hierarchical state-church system by the very act of coming to America, they pro-

ceeded to attack the economic and political tyranny of hereditary monarchy; at the same time they gradually abolished the restrictions of a static corporate society with its fixed class system and its state-controlled economy. And ultimately, having erected both state and federal constitutions which imbedded the moral law into the written law of the land, they gradually established the complete equality of all white men under God through universal manhood suffrage and rotation in office. The concept of the omni-competent, self-governing, self-reliant common man was really the final triumph of the first stage of American pietistic-perfectionism. In the Age of Jackson the two interacting components of pietistic-perfectionism flowered in unison: inner perfection or holiness as personal union with God and the perfectibility of the world through the regeneration of everyone in it. America had at last thrown off all the shackles of Satan and all the carnal corruptions of this world and was now ready for the ultimate confrontation with God. In 1836 Charles Grandison Finney, the foremost evangelist of his day and later president of Oberlin College in its perfectionist era, predicted that it would be possible to convert "the whole land in two years."⁶ At the same time a Baptist layman named William Miller was persuading thousands of Americans that the millennium would begin on March 21, 1843. Both predictions were premature.

The triumph of Jacksonian democracy marked a new crisis in American pietism just when the millennium seemed at hand. Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out the danger to moral freedom lurking in the potential tyranny of the majority which Jacksonian democracy made possible. Had the pietists recognized the logic of their striving for complete equality under God they might have foreseen this threat. Instead, they had cast aside the cautious checks and balances which the conservative pietists who founded the federal system had set up to prevent such a possibility.⁷ They cast it aside not only by expanding the electorate and creating political parties directly responsible to it, but also by changing the theological rationale for rule by the elite. It is significant that the most

⁶ *Letters of Theodore Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld, and Sarah Grimke*, eds. G. H. Barnes and D. L. Dumond (New York, 1934) I, 318-19.

⁷ See the opening chapter in Richard Hofstadter's *The American Political Tradition* in which he points out that "there is a serious dilemma in the philosophy of the Fathers" of the Constitution: "They thought man was a creature of rapacious self-interest and yet they wanted him to be free." Like the Puritans, they tried to balance man's freedom as a moral agent against his depravity as a sinner. They did it by granting the principle of government by consent of the governed and then checking its majority will. They did it also by placing moral absolutes in the Bill of Rights against which the majority might not act. They rejected Thomas Paine's radical pietistic notion that the people has a right to do whatever it chooses to do because its voice is the voice of God.

radical of the revolutionary state constitutions were written in places like Pennsylvania and Vermont where antinomian pietists predominated, while the most conservative state constitutions were established in Connecticut and Massachusetts where Calvinistic pietists predominated. The gradual triumph of Arminianism over Calvinism in the latter half of the eighteenth century and early part of the nineteenth century was the theological side of the political shift toward democracy. The First Great Awakening began this shift in a pietistic revolt against the declining fervor of a decadent Calvinism and the corrupting influence of the rising Enlightenment. But by emphasizing immediate, crisis conversion through emotional itinerant preaching, the Awakening shifted the whole emphasis of Calvinism in the direction of Separatist pietism. Not only did the Awakening seriously undermine the established church system throughout the colonies but it also undermined the conception of a learned clergy and of rule by the predestined elect. In the evangelistic fervor engendered by the Awakening, pietists of all kinds gradually abandoned the emphasis on a limited atonement and worked their way toward the doctrines of free will, free grace and immediate salvation open to all men. By the end of the eighteenth century the unique American systems of itinerant evangelism and mass revivalism had evolved to provide the techniques for regenerating a whole society (and through missionaries, the whole world).

During the Second Great Awakening the conservative pietists of the East gradually merged with the more radical pietists of the frontier in the efforts to get all of the unwashed masses washed in the Blood of the Lamb before deism, Unitarianism and Jacobinical mob rule put an end to the concept of a Christian commonwealth. This theological merger of Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, Separatists and Methodists produced Evangelical pietism; and evangelical pietists believed that a Christian commonwealth could be achieved through the massing of the votes of the regenerate to make "a Christian Party in politics." These voters would elect only converted Christians to office and these legislators in turn would enact and enforce Christian morality throughout the nation. Thus revivalism replaced the establishment as the American method of maintaining moral order without (it was thought) abandoning moral freedom. Or, to put it another way, the evangelical Protestant denominations became a kind of national church dedicated to enforcing the moral law upon everyone in the nation either by revivalistic religion (which produced voluntary obedience) or by a majority vote of the regenerate (which compelled obedience of the unregenerate). However, in their zeal to make America a Christian country the evangelicals began to equate the moral absolute with their own narrow set of Protestant, mid-

dle-class, rural virtues. They wanted to outlaw the Masons and the Mormons, to enact nativist laws, to enforce prohibition, to censor immorality, to prevent birth control, to maintain a Christian Sabbath, and eventually to restrict immigration and pass laws preventing the teaching of evolution.

With this transformation of the radical pietism of the Separatists or antinomians into the narrow conformity which eventually became Fundamentalism, a new form of pietism emerged to offset it. And this we may call the post-Christian form of American pietism. But it is important to note that post-Christian pietism is by no means anti-Christian. The anti-Christian or anticlerical thought of Thomas Paine was never a significant force in American life. The real basis of post-Christian pietism in America was the Jeffersonian adaptation of the moral sense philosophy of the Scottish Realists. Thomas Jefferson made Scottish intuitionism, the innate moral faculty in all men, the basis of his faith in democracy. He did so as a means of preserving the moral freedom of the individual against what he considered the theocentric authoritarianism of the established priesthood.⁸ He saw the evangelical Calvinism of Timothy Dwight and Lyman Beecher as the spiritual arm of the political paternalism of the Federalist Party, and he was not far wrong. Jefferson, in my view, qualifies as the first post-Christian pietist not only because he joined the movement for disestablishment and opposed the moralistic pretensions of the evangelicals, but also because he did so in the name of preserving the teachings of Jesus against those who would pervert them into their own ideological blueprint for a conformist society. His attack upon the authoritarianism of the Calvinist Federalists was carried on by Emerson's fight against the paternalistic pretensions of the Unitarian Whigs. And just as Timothy Dwight of Yale saw Jeffersonianism as Jacobinical atheism, so Andrews Norton of Harvard saw Emersonian Transcendentalism as "the latest form of infidelity."

The post-Christian pietism of Jefferson differed from that of Emerson more in degree than in quality. Both men were equally committed to moral freedom through adherence to moral law; both believed in the trustworthiness of the heart and conscience of the average man. Everyone is familiar with Jefferson's famous statement concerning the moral equality, if not superiority, of the plowman ("Nature's nobleman") in comparison with the professor. Let me quote a less well-known statement which Jefferson made to his nephew, Peter Carr, in 1787, on the same subject:

⁸ For Jefferson's use of the Scottish Realists see Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1943), pp. 15-22, 45-53.

Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give up the earth itself and all it contains, rather than do an immoral act. . . . An honest heart being the first blessing, a knowing head is the second.

What is this but a paraphrase of the Biblical injunction, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" I wonder too whether Orestes Brownson had not been reading Jefferson when he wrote in the *Democratic Review* in 1840 against Andrews Norton's learned attack upon Transcendentalism:

All are capable of judging of the doctrine [of the New Testament] itself, whether it be of God or not. The unlettered ploughman by this is placed, so far as the evidences of his religious faith are concerned, on a level with the most erudite scholar or the profoundest philosopher. Christianity by this is adapted to the masses. . . . It recognises a witness within the soul that testifies for God. . . . It paves the way for universal freedom, for every man to become a priest and a king. . . .⁹

This then is the Jeffersonian-Jacksonian-Emersonian reformulation of the pietistic doctrine of the priesthood of all believers. By this exaltation of the moral sense, conscience or intuition, democracy could be based upon the universal suffrage of the common man. And thus there was a new pietistic counterpoise, or countervailing power, to the Christian party in politics; i.e., post-Christian pietism. While this reliance upon the voice of the people as the voice of God was as liable to majority tyranny as the combined vote of the evangelical saints, it offered a more viable alternative for the rebellion of the individual heart. It became the basis of a new form of antinomianism. And it was to this iron string of self-reliant individualism that Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman tuned their message. It was to "the honest heart" that the reformers, the utopians, the abolitionists of the day offered their manifold panaceas and received a response which made the era the most nonconformist in our history. Except insofar as the abolition movement captured the American people, it may be said that the individualistic antinomian perfectionists and the evangelical conservative perfectionists fought each other to a stand-off in the years 1830-60.

After the Civil War the second stage of American pietistic-perfectionism commenced. The pendulum had swung as far as it could go toward individual freedom through self-reliant anti-institutionalism. Now it had to go back to the social ethic of the general welfare in order to preserve the moral law and individual freedom. In the industrial revolution following 1860, self-reliance and equal opportunity hardened into the rigid

⁹ Quoted in *The Transcendentalists*, ed. Perry Miller (Cambridge, 1950), p. 246.

determinism of Spencer's social Darwinism (though it was a characteristically American optimistic and melioristic determinism). The pietistic individualism of Emerson was perverted into a defense of rugged individualism behind which the self-made plutocrats could hide their new form of oligarchic control. Reformation was baffled by a dogmatic insistence upon the Jeffersonian doctrine of *laissez faire*. The evangelical denominations, now firmly entrenched as a national establishment, even appropriated Darwin's evolutionary hypothesis to the service of a Christian conservatism under the phrase, "Evolution is God's way of doing things."

The new danger of institutionalized tyranny in the complexities of urban industrialism, personified as "Big Business" and "Big Labor," offered the countervailing pietist no alternative but to invoke the power of a benevolent government to smash or regulate the new threats to moral freedom. In the third of America's great awakenings, pietism was reformulated in the churches by the Social Gospelers in the ideals of Christian socialism. They awakened American consciences to the moral evils of the industrial system by calling upon them to apply "the social teachings of Jesus" to free those crushed by "the malefactors of great wealth." However, the Populist, Labor and Progressive reformers, taking a different tack, utilized Hamiltonian means to achieve Jeffersonian ends. Just as Jacksonian pietists crushed "the monster bank" in order to destroy a monopoly which was denying freedom of opportunity to the common man, so the Progressives attacked "the vested interests," "the soul-less corporations," "the demons of Wall Street" with a fervor that was often as heedless of consequences as the abolition movement. And as Richard Hofstadter has shown, these pietistic reformers revealed their evangelical origins by their support of the Fundamentalist William Jennings Bryan and of the Prohibition movement in the rural areas, as well as by their support of Woodrow Wilson, the most pietistic of all our Presidents, in the urban areas.

Shortly after the Social Gospel triumphs of the New Deal, it became apparent that government bureaucracy itself was now an institutional threat to liberty—especially when "Big Government" became the partner of "Big Business" and "Big Labor." The tension between the desire for moral order and moral freedom reached a state of desperation after World War II and unleashed a new pietistic revival which has been with us ever since. Conservative pietists not only judged "Bigness" wrong in itself, but they found evidence of atheistic Communism (like the Bavarian Illuminati) in all aspects of our huge and complicated social structure—in our State Department, in our labor unions, in our philanthropic foundations, in our army, even in our Supreme Court and our

churches. In order to save our souls and our society these conservative (usually ultra-conservative) pietists urged a complete dismantling of Bigness in order to return America to the days of free labor, free enterprise and laissez-faire government.

At the other extreme, the antinomian pietists in the postwar awakening emphasized that Big Government and Big Labor had forgotten their original purpose — social justice for the weak; instead they were crushing individual liberty by failing to uphold the moral absolutes of the Bill of Rights and by putting institutional goals above personal needs and rights. The institutions of government and labor had become as corrupt and overbearing as Big Business or the old established church system of the past. Some religious leaders, discouraged by the results of the Social Gospel and inspired by the European theology called neo-orthodoxy, evolved a new form of pietistic radicalism which combined the old moral absolutes with a new sociological relativism. This sophisticated neopietism, of which Reinhold Niebuhr was the foremost exponent, revitalized the churches and spilled over to recall the post-Christian nonchurch-goers to their traditional values. One group of neo-pietists looked to the Supreme Court to challenge Bigness in the name of the moral law imbedded in the Bill of Rights; and they filled the ranks of organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union and the A.D.A. Another group, aroused by the moral implications of the atom bomb, formed organizations to crusade for disarmament and a sane nuclear policy. And in the midst of this new concern for freedom the Negro Revolution exploded, producing movements like Martin Luther King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference, James Farmer's Congress of Racial Equality, and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee where Christian and non-Christian pietists demonstrated anew the depth of the antinomian tradition of civil disobedience in America. Simultaneously the creation of the Peace Corps awakened again the dedicated fervor and personal commitment of the nineteenth-century foreign missionaries among a younger generation thought to be lost in ennui or the search for security. Faced with the most fearful and baffling difficulties of their history, Americans took courage from their pietistic faith that he who would save his life must lose it in a cause beyond himself.¹⁰

¹⁰ It is possible to make out a case for the continuity of the tension between the Puritan concept of the organic or corporate state as opposed to the antinomian concept of Christian anarchy throughout our history. One can cite the Whig concept of a Christian party in politics, the theocratic belief in stewardship through benevolent societies and even the utopian experiments in communal living as evidence for this before the Civil War. It is even easier after 1865 to point to the concept of Christian socialism and ultimately of the welfare state as embodying this organic view of society in opposition to the increasingly atomistic view of society. But while this form of the

What I am trying to say in this rather awkward and cursory glance at American history and the pietistic awakenings and reformulations that have shaped it, is that the dialectic of pietism is a continuous spirit around the moral core of our cultural ethic. What is to the left of the core from one angle of vision or in one generation is at the right in the next. In any given period there are conservative and antinomian pietists striving to apply the values of this moral core to maintain the balance between personal integrity and social justice, between the maintenance of moral order and the attainment of moral freedom, as God or an honest heart gives them to see the right. But what is always central to the quest for perfection in America is the proper interpretation of "the moral law" which, as Emerson said, "lies at the center of nature and radiates to the circumference."

While generalizations about such a variable tradition as pietism are hazardous, nevertheless I will venture this definition of its essential characteristics: American pietism is the belief that every individual is himself responsible for deciding the rightness or wrongness of every issue (large or small) in terms of a higher moral law; that he must make this decision the moment he is confronted with any question in order to prevent any complicity with evil; and having made his decision, he must commit himself to act upon it at once, taking every opportunity and utilizing every possible method to implement his decision not only for himself and in his own home or community, but throughout the nation and the world.¹¹

dialectic between moral order and moral freedom is in some ways more consistent than the one I offer here, it also involves a serious shift or inversion of the respective roles of the anti-institutional antinomian reformer and the conservative defender of institutionalized order. One can claim that through men like Bushnell and Munger and Gladden the Puritan and Edwardsian conception of the Christian commonwealth carries through logically into the twentieth century. But this makes the Social Gospeler the defender of institutionalized organic order instead of a radical reformer interested primarily in individual freedom; it ignores the direct line "from Edwards to Emerson" which Perry Miller has described. It ignores too the equally distinct line from, say, Endicott to the Mathers to the Beechers and to the Fundamentalists whose conception of a Christian commonwealth was repressive and conformist and the very opposite of the "liberal" aspects of the Social Gospel and the New Deal.

¹¹ I do not want to imply here that the pietistic quality of American life produces only honest and straightforward moralistic appraisals or rationales for our actions. On the contrary, our pietism forces us to make (or enables us to indulge in) moralistic defenses of even the most immoral actions: slavery was God's will and a positive good; imperialism on the American continent or abroad was "manifest destiny" and "the White Man's burden." It would probably be fair to say that because of its intense pietism America has produced more hypocrisy per square soul than almost any other civilization in Christendom. The classic example of this was the inversion of the Protestant ethic into the success myth which concluded that the poor were poor because they deserved to be poor—they lacked industry, sobriety, thrift and piety. Similarly,

Any attempt to define precisely the moral law or to enumerate Americans' moral absolutes either in terms of the revealed will of God or the natural rights of man is not only impossible but really beside the point. Pietism is a state of mind and not a fixed ideology, which explains why America has been spared the more baneful consequences of European totalitarian democracy. No one man, no group and no ideology has the blueprint for our society—not even the Bible has been a blueprint though some groups have tried to make their interpretation of it into one. It is the heart of American pietism that the individual is considered the single most competent judge of moral truth and that his judgment is to be respected even if it leads him into civil disobedience. The pietists who framed the Constitution organized this nation and its institutions as an open and not a closed society. True pietists (the pietists of the vital center, whether conservative-Puritan or antinomian-Separatist) have never claimed to know the complete will of God. In fact, it is one of their fundamental tenets that God is continually revealing himself in new ways and shedding yet "further light" upon his will: I Corinthians 4:5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts."¹² The self-righteous, rightwing fanatic (not to be confused with the Puritan conservative pietist) who equates the moral law with "the American way of life" is just as heretical to the true spirit of pietism as the leftwing fanatic (not to be confused with the antinomian pietist) who equates it with Marxian socialism. Neither of these is really seeking further light either for moral order or moral freedom. They have in fact closed their minds to it. Or, as Reinhold Niebuhr put it, they have "absolutized the relative." Yet even these potential totalitarians in America, whether of the left or right, are still more appropriately described as aberrant pietists rather than as atheistic Marxists or proto-Fascists.

But if pietism is the key to the American character, what about the many claims that America is a materialistic and secular civilization? Despite the fact that Americans seem to have devoted as much of their talent, wealth and energy to perfecting their means of production and distribution of creature comforts as they have to perfecting their personal

labor unions were attacked in the name of "freedom of contract" or "the right to work," and fair housing laws for Negroes are voted down in the name of "the sanctity of private property." But to point out the extent of American hypocrisy is not to deny the prevalence of American pietism but to confirm it.

¹² See also John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth."

or social morality, the charge that we are a materialistic nation simply will not hold water. Almost all intelligent European observers who have come to know America have perceived this. The philosopher George Santayana, who lived here during the height of the Gilded Age, characterized Americans as "extreme idealists in the region of hope." The average American, he said, is "an idealist working on matter." The American does not respect or admire money as the Europeans do simply in and for itself; money to them is to be used, not hoarded. Wealth is important not for itself but for what it can do to improve the world:

The American talks about money, because that is the symbol and measure he has at hand for success, intelligence, and power; but as to money itself, he makes, loses, spends, and gives it away with a very light heart.¹⁸

Americans have always maintained a pietistic dislike for the idle rich, for conspicuous consumption, for the spendthrift or the man who wastes either his money or his talent. We have admired those businessmen most who have given their money away most freely for philanthropic ends; we have made social work a profession. And our willingness to support such international charity as Lend-Lease, the Marshall Plan, Point Four, foreign aid and the Peace Corps indicates a similar sense of stewardship toward the world. Our cynicism about money and philanthropy is only a veneer to hide our do-goodism. I once heard the president of Brown University say when he was seeking money from a wealthy businessman, "*Pecunia non olit*"; but he would never have said it had he not recognized that Americans still fear, as Washington Gladden feared Rockefeller's gift to his denomination, that money ("filthy lucre") may be "tainted" by the manner in which it is earned. It is fortunate for our own sense of stewardship that the nations of the world which accept our gifts do not feel as Gladden did about how we made our money.

It is just as inaccurate to say that America is a "secular" culture as it is to say that it is materialistic. The United States Supreme Court (in the person of Justice William O. Douglas) has told us, and we have no higher authority on earth to justify ourselves, that America is a religious nation founded upon a belief in God. We exempt our churches from taxation as we do our philanthropic and educational enterprises because we wish to encourage them. And if we take Bible reading and prayer out of the public schools, it is from the same desire to protect the spiritual freedom of our children and churches from the compromising power of the State

¹⁸ George Santayana, *Character and Opinion in the United States* (Anchor paperback, 1956), pp. 108, 109, 115.

which motivated disestablishment, though most Americans are still fearful lest public education become "irreligious" or "amoral." We will no doubt find a method (through "released time" or "shared time" or some other plan) to inculcate religion and morality concurrently with the so-called secular subjects.

The same moralistic and pietistic temper has always inspired our political life. There has scarcely been an election in American history since 1796 which was not conducted as a fight between good and evil for the power to steer the ship of state toward the millennial harbor. If the Jeffersonians were considered atheistic Jacobins, the Federalists were considered power-hungry monarchists and defenders of a corrupt established-church system. If the Whigs were monopolistic plutocrats defending a monster bank, the Jacksonians were barbarian demagogues wrecking the economy. The South saw Lincoln as the tyrant of the North and Republicans saw the South as betrayers of the rights of man. In the 1880s the liberal Republican Mugwumps campaigned against the corruptions of the Grant administration; in the 1890s the Democrats thought they were about to be crucified upon "a Cross of Gold," and in 1912 Theodore Roosevelt said of the Bull Moose Party, "We stand at Armageddon and battle for the Lord." Franklin Roosevelt called his "New Deal" a crusade for human dignity, while Herbert Hoover called it the road to serfdom. Dwight D. Eisenhower and Barry Goldwater campaigned against a corrupt mess of men in Washington who were soft on Communism, while Stevenson and Johnson have insisted that only their party is able to maintain the peace and to care for the poor.

Now it may be argued that regardless of campaign slogans the American two- (or four-) party system is essentially a compromise system and that most of the professional business of politics either in the smoke-filled room or the cloakrooms of the state and federal capitals is done on a very hard-headed basis of lobbying, logrolling and political back-scratching. It might even be argued that the doctrinaire politics of the multi-party systems of Europe are more morally rigid than American politics. But the weight of these arguments is really the other way around. Doctrinaire political parties are immoral by American pietistic standards because they insist that all politicians and party members vote not as their consciences tell them but as their party line tells them. American political parties, while resting upon compromise between the pietistic extremes of right and left, are nevertheless dedicated to the belief that the compromise itself is the only right and just course toward the millennium. Once the party conventions are over, the party platforms (no matter what they were hammered out) become the voice of God and the people whose will they represent. We believe that it is the conscience of the people.

which makes our party platforms and not any doctrinaire party dictator newing to a rigid political ideology. The logrolling and lobbying and back-scratching in Washington are grimly tolerated as the only apparent means in this corrupt world of getting the nation to move forward without trampling too heavily on someone's freedom (the virtue of the filibuster). Nevertheless, there are strict limitations upon "politicking" beyond which the politician moves only at the risk of being "exposed" for corrupt and immoral betrayal of his "public trust." The business of politics in America is conducted on the razor-thin edge of public moralism and scarcely a month goes by that some politician does not fall off that edge into permanent ruin and disgrace. (Has there ever been an election without a Sherman Adams, a Harry Vaughn or a Bobby Baker?) In fact, the essential characteristic of all American political campaigning, whether for dog-catcher or for the presidency, is the fact that the voter is, or ought to be, disgusted with the rascality of the incumbent. "The professional" is simply the man who can get the most done without staining his moral image sufficiently to fail of re-election. We respect but do not love the political "pro" because we think "politics is dirty."

European observers have shuddered at the religious fervor of American election campaigns only slightly less than they have shuddered at what George Kennan rightly called 'our "legalistic-moralistic approach" to foreign policy. This approach, said Kennan, is "the carrying over into the affairs of states of the concepts of right and wrong, the assumption that state behavior is a fit subject for moral judgment." And because Americans pietistically believe that there is a moral law which is binding for nations in the same way as for individuals, they also believe in punishing to the fullest extent the criminal nation which breaks that law. Hence our conception of total war, total surrender, total victory. We clothe our 'military efforts in the language of idealism,' said Kennan, and refuse 'to admit the validity and legitimacy of power realities and aspirations, to accept them without feeling the obligation of moral judgment.'¹⁴

And so the defeat of the Southern rebellion in 1861 was a moral question, the repayment of Allied war debts in the 1920s was a moral question, the admission of Communist China to the United Nations is a moral question, the defense of Formosa, Quemoy, Matsu, Viet Nam is a moral question, the granting of foreign aid to Yugoslavia, Poland, India, is a moral question, the whole problem of coexistence with "criminal," atheistic, promise-breaking Communism is a moral question. Any president who fails to see matters in this light, who acts on the

¹⁴ See F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy* (Mentor paperback, 1951), pp. 55, 66, 73, 93, 98.

ground that more is at stake than making a moralistic judgment about right and wrong in such affairs, runs the risk, as Lincoln and Kennedy did, of producing profound distrust, fear, anger and hatred among Americans.

In short, there is no area of American life which is free from our pietistic concern; none in which the pietistic attitude is not a significant factor.

So much for the exposition of my hypothesis. Now let me conclude by making a few brief applications of it. If we are a nation of pietists, then, this hypothesis must apply to Roman Catholics and Jews as well as to Protestants. It must also apply to our arts and letters as well as to our politics. It must apply to the daily life of the average man as well as to our thinkers and doers.

In regard to the Roman Catholics and Jews, I have already intimated that the measure of their Americanism or acculturation in their own eyes, as well as in that of historians and sociologists, has been the extent to which they have imbibed the temper of American pietism. Or perhaps it would be more fair to say that America has heightened in these more recent immigrants the pietistic-perfectionism inherent in our shared Judeo-Christian tradition. Will Herberg, while he seems to me to underestimate American pietism, rightly sees very little difference today between the outlooks of the three major groups, Protestant, Catholic, Jew; their growing ecumenical fraternalism bears this out. For example, a few months ago Cardinal Cushing gave his hearty endorsement to Billy Graham and urged all Roman Catholics to attend his meetings. And it would be difficult to find much basic disagreement among the messages presented by Joshua Liebman in his book, *Peace of Mind*, by Billy Graham in *Peace with God* or Fulton Sheen in *Peace of Soul*. All three of them bear striking resemblances also to that other recent best-seller, Norman Vincent Peale's *Power of Positive Thinking*.

It is not strange that the Reform movement in Judaism found such compatible surroundings in America in the latter part of the nineteenth century and that Rabbi Stephen S. Wise became one of the leading figures in the Social Gospel movement. I should guess too that the strength of the Zionist movement in this country owes something to the millennial and utopian tradition of American perfectionism, though on its own terms Zionism belongs more nearly to the conservative pietism of the Puritan Bible Commonwealth or Brigham Young's Mormon Zion than to the antinomian pietism of the Oneida Community or Brook Farm.

The liberal wing of the Roman Catholic Church in America is comparable to Reform Judaism in its adoption of American Progressive and Social Gospel ideas and in its commitment over the years to education,

labor reform and religious toleration. In the late nineteenth century American pietistic principles so far invaded the Catholic Church here under the evangelistic impetus of Isaac Hecker and Orestes Brownson (aided and abetted by Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Ireland) that the Pope felt obliged to condemn what he considered the heresy of "Americanism" though he was as wrong as Lyman Beecher had been to see a threat to religious faith in Hecker's pietistic principles.¹⁵ Catholic liberals have tried to make some compromise with the American public school system and today it is possible to find Catholics working in the American Civil Liberties Union to prevent federal aid to private schools out of the conviction that it will compromise the freedom of the Catholic Church. The line from John Ireland and John A. Ryan to Cardinals Cushing and Ritter seems perfectly clear, and the American election of a Roman Catholic to the presidency confirmed the fact that Catholicism is operating here within the accepted limits of our pietistic frame of reference. Even Cardinal Spellman, whose attachment to the conservative wing has dimmed his lustre in recent years, has tolerated in his diocese the existence of Dorothy Day's anarchistic and perfectionist *Catholic Worker*, than which no magazine and no enterprise in America could be more pietistic.

Here again it is necessary to avoid associating pietism simply with progressivism or the welfare state ideals. Stephen Wise and Dorothy Day are clearly in the antinomian camp of American pietism. But we have also seen a strong movement among Catholics to associate with conservative and even rightwing fanatical pietism since the days of Father Coughlin. During the McCarthy era rightwing pietistic politics became very appealing to a large number of Roman Catholics. I would certainly put William F. Buckley and the *National Review* in the same rightwing pietistic camp with the Protestant journal called *Christian Economics*, which numbered Billy Graham among its board members. Ralph Lord Roy in his book, *Apostles of Discord*, noted that it was no longer uncommon to see Roman Catholic priests sitting on the same platforms with Fundamentalist ministers in various rallies designed to make America safe for the cross and the flag against Communism. In this respect there is little to choose between the conservative revivalism of Fulton Sheen and that of Billy Graham. You can compare the sermons of this Catholic bishop and this Southern Baptist evangelist and find them

¹⁵ Archbishop Ireland once characterized Hecker's views in these pietistic terms: "His was the profound conviction that in the present age, at any rate, the order of the day should be individual action—every man doing his fair duty and waiting for no one else to prompt him." Quoted in Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1960), p. 431.

virtually identical in their pietistic denunciations of atheistic Communism and their blatant equation of Christianity with American patriotism and the free enterprise system. And on the other side of the fence, it is often hard to tell the politically liberal editorials of the Catholic magazine *Commonweal* from those in the Jewish *Commentary* or the Protestant *Christian Century*. What the Protestants, Catholics and Jews all share, whether conservative or liberal, is the acute sense of personal responsibility to make our system work, an urgency to remake the world in conformity with the ethical absolutes we hold in common from the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the sense of guilt at our own good fortune in the midst of a world of underprivilege. Perhaps the most striking feature of America's fourth Great Awakening has been the fact that for the first time Roman Catholics and Jews shared fully in it. "To be a Protestant, a Catholic, or a Jew," Herberg concludes, "are today the alternative ways of being an American."¹⁶

Turning to the field of American literature, where I speak only as an amateur, I can merely suggest some of the many ways in which I think it can be described as pietistic. The most obvious, though the least satisfying to us today, is in its relation to "the Genteel Tradition"—the view that all true literature is and must be morally pure and spiritually uplifting. This outlook dominated our literary aesthetic in the nineteenth century and it is epitomized in the pietism of Bryant's "To a Waterfowl," Longfellow's "Excelsior," and Holmes' "The Chambered Nautilus." This moralistic quality also inspired Cooper's Leatherstocking Tales and most of William Dean Howells' "smiling" realism. If this soul-perfecting aesthetic did not produce our best literature, it certainly produced our most popular and most characteristic.

The second and almost equally popular pietistic strain in our literature has been in our novels of righteous indignation, social satire and muckraking reform. Characteristic of the best-selling novels in this vein are *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *Looking Backward*, *In His Steps*, *The Jungle* and *The Grapes of Wrath*. Among this group of pietists striving by one means or another to goad Americans to reform their corruptions and to get on with perfecting the world, we would also have to include novelists of a somewhat higher rank like John Dos Passos, Theodore Dreiser, Frank Norris, Sinclair Lewis and Hamlin Garland. Their muckraking was less direct but their criticism and implicit idealism was no less compulsive.

But our best poets and writers belong in the third category of literary pietism. They are the ones who, like the Puritans, are not sure they are

¹⁶ Will Herberg, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* (New York, 1955), p. 274.

among the saved but who want desperately to establish some rapport with the absolute. They are pietists because, as Paul Tillich puts it, they face the ultimate concerns of the human situation. R. P. Blackmur, in an illuminating essay on "Religious Poetry in America," has characterized this group of American writers as belonging to "the great wrestling tradition" of western Christendom—those who, like Jacob wrestling with the Angel, are "wrestling with God, with the self, with the conscience, and above all in our latter day with our behavior." In this tradition belongs the poetry of Edward Taylor, of Emily Dickinson and of Walt Whitman's "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed." In the post-Christian era of American pietism this tradition includes the poetry of T. S. Eliot, Robert Lowell, Robert Frost and Wallace Stevens. "All of these poets," says Blackmur, "write poetry which can be understood only if it is taken as religious." But

since there is no seal upon us in this post-Christian time, our religious like our other emotions come out of Pandora's box; . . . as religion takes new forms and changes the nature and scope of its interventions, so the poetry associated with religion supervenes differently upon our reading lives. . . . We are likely to be concerned with the excruciation (as Jacob was not); with Jacob's wrestling with the Angel, Man, or God; with the dark night of the soul which never ends . . . with the great sweep of rival creations since . . . we can accept God but not his Creation.¹⁷

This same statement applies with equal force to our novelists, most of whom belong in the post-Christian tradition despite Randall Stewart's attempt to fit them into the category of Christian orthodoxy. It is certainly this wrestling tradition which informs Melville's quarrel with God—as Blackmur says, "he sought the God he fought." This is the essence of Hawthorne's probing of the human heart. It inspired Mark Twain's desperate longing for the certainty of St. Joan and his conclusion that between Mary Baker Eddy and "The Man Who Corrupted Hadleyburg" there was no moral truth left in modern man. It lies at the heart of William Faulkner's message in *The Fable*. The temper of our best literature can be stated in pietistic-perfectionist terms as anguish, frustration, despair, anger, intensity—anguish over the impurity of man in an impure world; anger at the corruptions and corrupters of human conscience; frustration at man's inability to come to terms with himself or the universe. No doubt all great writers are fundamentally concerned with such wrestlings, but I am convinced that this concern has been more

¹⁷ R. P. Blackmur, "Religious Poetry in the United States," in *Religious Perspectives in American Culture*, eds. J. W. Smith and A. Leland (Princeton, 1961), p. 285.

pervasive and more consistent in American literature than in that of any other culture in modern Christendom or post-Christendom. It is not just *one* theme of our literature, it is *the* theme.

The peculiarly American approach to the wrestling tradition has been described in many ways. R. W. B. Lewis in *The American Adam*, argues that our literature has been permeated by "the Adamic ideal," the search for innocence in the New World's second Garden of Eden. And even men like Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Ellison and Salinger who know, in the twentieth century, that the quest for perfection is bound to fail because it is based upon false premises, nevertheless write on in search of it. The heroes and nonheroes of contemporary American fiction (and drama too), Lewis concludes,

share in their common aloneness that odd aura of moral priority over the waiting world which was a central ingredient in the Adamic fictional tradition [of the nineteenth century]. Each of them struggles tirelessly, sometimes unwittingly and often absurdly, to realize the full potentialities of the classic figure which each represents: the Emersonian figure, 'the simple genuine self against the whole world.'¹⁸

Which is really not only the classic Emersonian figure but the classic pietistic figure of the Christian man who is in the world but not of it because he will not, must not, compromise with evil lest he fall again like Adam.

Another approach to the pietistic temper of our literature is offered in A. N. Kaul's *The American Vision*. Kaul points out that the absence of a realistic tradition in mid-nineteenth-century American fiction and the failure of our novelists in this period to be concerned with pragmatic or practical social reform (as say Dickens or Balzac were) was the result of a more basic concern among our novelists to create a perfect or an ideal society:

The most significant novelists of the first sixty years of the 19th century . . . shared the general feeling that America was the land of social experimentation, and while practical men battled over new political and economic institutions, they sought in their work the moral values necessary for the regeneration of human society. Exploration of existing society led them repeatedly to the theme of ideal community life.

That is, they were concerned not with the mere palliatives of reform but with "a fundamental social ethic." Hence, says Kaul, those books which ostensibly deal with an escape from civilization, like the Leatherstocking Tales, *Huckleberry Finn*, *Omoo*, *The Blithedale Romance*, and even

¹⁸ R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Phoenix paperback, 1958), p. 198.

Henry James' books about Americans in Europe, are not stating a rejection of our society but rather are posing for their readers the ultimate questions about the essential qualities of an ideal society. "Separation from Europe was the great fact of the American experience even as the creation of a regenerate society was its highest ideal," writes Kaul. Therefore the theme which American writers posed for themselves and their readers "can be described as separation from established society and search for ideal community."¹⁹ And by community Kaul means not merely some political Utopia but the kind of communion of free individuals which the pietist finds in a separated church of regenerate believers. It is a moral and not a pragmatic search for Utopia.

A third approach to the pietistic quality of American literature is put forward by Barry Marks in his study of E.E. Cummings as a classic example of the American idealist in revolt against a bourgeois culture. Marks concludes his discussion of Cummings' peculiar and difficult stylistic devices by comparing his style to the difficult styles adopted by so many other American writers—Thoreau, Whitman, Melville, James, Faulkner. Thoreau, Marks says, "had undergone a profound spiritual renewal" in his experience at Walden Pond, and "he was satisfied with nothing less than a book which might induce readers to share the same experience." The most characteristic writers from Thoreau to Cummings write out of what is to them the same kind of "world-shattering" religious experience. And rather than explain it in what would be only feeble expositions, they purposely adopted a difficult, even disorderly and obscure style hoping thereby "to shake readers from the expectation of being *merely* entertained, of *merely* reading a book [about an experience], into a readiness to participate with their whole beings in a deep encounter with life itself."²⁰

A similar pietistic interpretation can be made of American art and architecture where a direct personal confrontation of the visual image is designed to uplift the viewer (as in the Hudson River School of painting) or to shock him (as in the Ashcan, abstract, or Pop Art schools) into a new awareness of himself and his world—an awareness which always has moral overtones. I might also point to the moralistic qualities of Jefferson's architectural theory or Horatio Greenough's "functionalism," and suggest that the essentially pietistic quality of American architecture lies in its perennial and deep-seated urge to place man in harmony with the supernatural through establishing his proper relationship to Nature. Our most characteristically American architects from Andrew Jackson Down-

¹⁹ A. N. Kaul, *The American Vision* (New Haven, 1963), pp. 5, 35, 67.

²⁰ Barry A. Marks, *E. E. Cummings* (New York, 1964), pp. 134, 136.

ing to Frank Lloyd Wright have agreed with Emerson's view that "Nature is the expositor of the Divine Mind" and that we must, in Horace Bushnell's phrase, go "through Nature to God."

This is essentially what Wright means by "organic Architecture," and by his phrase "Every true aesthetic is an implication of nature." "Reality," he wrote, "is spirit—essence brooding just behind aspects." His pietism, like Emerson's, can be seen in his reliance upon the intuitive communion between the artist and the moral law. It is this, he says, which produces "the harmony of the whole" in any true work of art.²¹

As for the pietistic-perfectionism which abounds in our everyday life, it takes two forms: one, the quest for perfectionism as itself a kind of pious obligation, and the other, a gnawing fear or guilt (sometimes described by sociologists as "the self-hatred of the middle class") that there is more to life than we are making of it, and that we must do better in the future.

However, while Americans think pietistically on moral questions, they are by no means so perfectionist as, say, the Germans or the Japanese are in the realm of craftsmanship, art or dedication to detail. No doubt some of the old Yankee craftsmen had this quality (like those who built the wonderful one hoss shays or the clipper ships) and the Shakers displayed it in their furniture and architecture. But by and large Americans have not been interested in creating perfect or even careful craftsmanship. They are in too much of a hurry to get on to the millennium to work patiently over any details. Craftsmanship is incompatible with shorter work hours and mass production; moreover it smacks of an exploited lower class and a wealthy aristocracy. Our perfectionism in work or in leisure (like our plastic sailboats that never need painting, caulking or scraping) lies in the realm of efficiency and easy functioning rather than in lasting quality, thoroughness or artistry of detail. There is no denying that American haste in construction is characteristically slipshod, makeshift, jerrybuilt. We build only for the short term, not for eternity. Only God can build for eternity and we have too far to go to reach perfection to waste time trying to perfect the imperfectible. Fearing the sin of pride in our own artistry or craftsmanship we righteously pretend to disdain the things you can't take with you.

American perfectionism lies in movement, in action and in the future. We believe a regenerate man is capable of "growing in grace" but pure grace exists only in heaven or in the millennium. We change our styles in clothes, home furnishings and automobiles almost yearly because

²¹ Frank Lloyd Wright, *An Autobiography* (London, 1932), pp. 144-54.

change itself is good—it prevents the hardening of anything into custom, tradition or institutionalism, which are by definition bad. They impede the pursuit of happiness by seeking to retain too much of the imperfect present or past. We sometimes regret the shoddiness of American workmanship and the wastefulness of built-in obsolescence (as Thorstein Veblen did) but on balance our distrust of institutionalism is stronger than our love of thrift. David Potter has pointed out that a "people of plenty" finds it difficult to maintain the Old World's faith in thrift as the Protestant ethic defined it. We see in those who hold up the ideals of perfect craftsmanship and art, reactionaries who would lead us back to the static class and craft system of medieval society—the Ralph Adams Crams, the T. S. Eliots, the Nashville Agrarians.

This is what gives the pietistic-perfectionist tone to American pragmatism despite the unfortunate slip of William James in defining it as "the cash value of ideas." Americans pietistically mistook James to mean that pragmatism was materialistic and concerned only with the expedient or profitable in the mercenary sense. But by using (as Santayana said) the only measure Americans have for values, James meant only to say that the value of pragmatism was in helping us get on with the job of perfecting our society and solving those institutional problems which impeded progress. The key to "the pragmatic revolt" like "the Transcendentalist revolt" was its pietistic anti-formalism, its dislike for a block universe, its openness to new experiments in thought and action. Despite John Dewey's apparent commitment to naturalism and behaviorism, his real motivating force was his desire to break the hold of the past and to reconstruct philosophy so as to facilitate change without, as he insisted, limiting freedom. Dewey's own inherent pietism, set forth in his Book *A Common Faith*, lies in his belief that "shared experience" will lead to a common set of values dedicated to the forward-looking experiment and to ever-widening freedom.²² When an American says he is pragmatic or empirical he means that he is willing to try anything new which promises to get himself or the world a little further along toward perfect freedom and perfect order.

Because we find it so difficult to reconcile our contradictory ideals, like

²² Dewey's "common faith" is post-Christian pietism in its rejection of the supernatural absolutes of revealed religion. But in its anti-institutionalism, its claims for "natural piety" and its "Faith in the continued disclosing of truth," it is, as Dewey said, "more religious in quality than is any faith in a completed revelation." "Any activity pursued in behalf of an ideal end against obstacles and in spite of threats of personal loss because of conviction of its general and enduring value is religious in quality." "It is this *active* relation between ideal and actual to which I would give the name 'God.'" It would be difficult to find a clearer statement of post-Christian pietism. See *A Common Faith* (New Haven, 1934), pp. 25-26, 27, 51.

thrift and change, pragmatism and absolutism, moral freedom and moral order, we carry on within our own hearts the terrible anguish of the Puritan conscience. We feel perpetually guilty because we do not live up to our own ideals and because our country does not live up to its ideals. Our sense of guilt is apparent in our high consumption of alcohol and our high rate of divorce, ulcers, heart attacks and colitis. I would contend that it is not the fierce pace of the American pursuit of "the Almighty dollar" which produces these results so much as our pietistic conscientiousness which makes us dissatisfied with ourselves. We drive ourselves to drink not for pleasure but to forget our failures. We even feel that our leisure is wasted and our pleasures are superficial though we work terrifically hard at them.

Out of this self-disgust and guilt, of course, comes much of what is most characteristically worthwhile about American life. We are not just flagellating ourselves by reading *Babbitt*, *The Status Seekers*, *The Organization Man*, *The Crack in the Picture Window*, *The Group*. We are engaging in healthy self-criticism and self-examination. We want to know where we have failed and we take our failures very seriously. We set up all sorts of societies and groups to improve ourselves and our society. We may laugh at the foibles of the P.T.A., the Women's Clubs, the Great Books clubs, the Boy Scouts, Adult Education and the League of Women Voters, but they are the essence of our social system. It is from this self-doubting and guilt-ridden middle class that the more radical pietists of the right and left draw their strength for periodic national reformations. We are too pietistic to like politics—politics requires too many compromises for an "honest" man—but we recognize the compromises we ourselves make in our everyday lives. We consider it our duty to vote and to make our political parties toe the line or to "throw the rascals out" if they are as forgetful of their campaign promises as we are of our New Year's resolutions. We are still perfectionists underneath our veneer of sophistication and still reformers despite our neo-orthodox awareness of original sin.

No final estimate of the value of the pietistic and perfectionist streaks in the American temper is possible until historical judgment can be passed upon the whole American experiment. These elements have produced some of the worst aspects of American self-righteousness, bigotry and naive stupidity. They have also inspired most of America's dynamic generosity, self-awareness and social concern. I do not contend that everything in American life can be traced to, or explained by, these qualities, but I do believe that by and large they have played a major role in shaping our decisions and given a distinctive coloration to our attitudes. For better or for worse America is, and always has been, a nation *engagé*—committed to a moralistic approach to life—a nation of pietists.

D O N S . K I R S C H N E R
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Henry A. Wallace as Farm Editor

EACH GENERATION PRODUCES A HANDFUL OF PUBLIC FIGURES WHO ARE, AT the same time, influential enough and complicated enough to become all things to all men. Such a man in the past generation was Henry A. Wallace. During his years in public service—and, for that matter, in those since he has retired quite literally to cultivate his garden—Wallace has been called an idealist (as if that were an accusation), a utopian, a mystic, a saint, a megalomaniac, a crank, a dupe, a radical, a Communist, a traitor to his party and a traitor to his country. All this smoke must surely betray a fire lit by no mere country boy with an innocent hobby of miscegenating corn plants.

Many years before Wallace's venture into splinter politics, when he sought to identify himself with labor and minority groups, he served as editor of *Wallaces' Farmer*, an influential family journal of agricultural affairs which he used as a forum to express his opinions on nearly everything. In one sense, this preface to his public career was a laboratory where he experimented with the ideas which he would soon carry with him into government. In a more immediate sense, however, these ideas shed some needed light on a vexing problem of the 1920s, for they provide an insight into the cultural discontent of that decade, and a case study in the complexities of the rural mind.¹

At the heart of Wallace's image of the world lay a profound reverence for nature. There was, as he saw it, a certain established order in nature which provided us with a basis for formulating value judgments. In proportion as things conformed to this natural order, they were good; in proportion as they deviated from it, they were bad. Here were the basic conditions for the emergence of true meaning in human affairs.

¹ This article is based solely upon the editorials that appeared in *Wallaces' Farmer* from the time when Wallace replaced his father as editor in March 1921, until the end of 1932, when Franklin Roosevelt was preparing to add him to the cabinet. Wallace's private papers remain closed, but these editorials alone would fill numerous volumes, and they cover a range of subjects as broad as American society.

With guiding postulates such as these, it is no wonder that Wallace was dismayed at what he saw in American society during the 1920s. Decay was evident everywhere because the nation had been lured away from nature by the siren song of artificiality, because it had mistaken glitter for substance. Here was a threat that had to be met squarely and thoughtfully by men of good will and clear vision with a firm commitment to building the good society.

Wallace centered his hopes for this good society around the belief that the farmer was the repository of all human virtue. The farmer derived this primacy in human affairs from his constant contact with the elemental things of life. Thus, when Wallace spoke of farming as the "basic industry," he meant not only that it was the economic basis of society, but that it was "the method of living on which all human life is based. It is the source from which comes all that is strongest and most virile in our civilization."² Had the "Creator of the earth" wanted cities to prevail, He would have established an urban civilization in the first place. Instead, He had made the earth a diverse wonderland of plants and animals, of mountains, prairies and deserts, and it was "in this world of variety and color and change [that] man has lived and developed."³ For man to desert this heritage was obviously unnatural, harmful and sacrilegious. Even the cities themselves had always depended upon rural America for their finest men. The great majority of our statesmen, scientists and industrial leaders had always come from the farms, Wallace asserted, and they had done so in spite of educational and cultural deprivations.⁴

Thus Wallace saw nature not only as the pattern from which man should tailor his values, but as a constant source of rejuvenation for him as well. One of its abiding joys, for instance, was the serenity of the countryside. At the end of a day's work the farmer could always revitalize himself by pondering that "moment of quiet in the evening when the cows and horses are cropping quietly out in the pasture. . . ."⁵ In contrast, the madhouse of noise, jangle and crowds in the city afforded the urban worker no respite at day's end from the crippling artificiality of his life. Wise men must inevitably return to nature for relaxation and

² *Wallaces' Farmer*, April 14, 1922. Since all references here are to the *Farmer*, henceforth only the date will be given.

³ October 3, 1924.

⁴ April 14, 1922. When Wallace returned from a visit to New York in 1926, he mentioned how impressed he had been by the "thousands of wonderful artists" there. He was convinced, however, that almost all of them had come from rural areas, and that the seeds of inspiration had been sown long before they had gone off to the city. See November 5, 1926.

⁵ September 30, 1921.

inspiration. It is only the fool in the city who "goes to a burlesque musical show and wonders why he can not feel rested."⁶

Nor was Wallace content merely to revere nature from afar. He seized every opportunity, in fact, to plunge himself into it. Often, when he could spare a few hours from his journalistic chores, he would steal away to pick corn in nearby fields. For Wallace this was relaxation. Small wonder, then, that he relished his summer vacations in the Colorado mountains, remote from the synthetic city life of Des Moines. On one of these trips, at an age when most nature-lovers begin to settle for bird-watching, he conditioned himself conscientiously for several days, and then charged up Pike's Peak in five hours, sharing his conquest in great detail with his readers when he returned.⁷ On another occasion, he described how his mother, grown haggard from a year in the city, looked ten years younger after a week of strenuous housework in the mountains. "Mountain air, pine tree odors, hot sunshine and cool shade," he explained, "have in them a magic healing. . . ."⁸ Nature, in other words, was more than just an awesome tableau to contemplate; it was a fountain of youth with powers to cure the illnesses of city life.

The ultimate importance of nature, however, was that it provided the ideal context for the development of an ideal man. Quite characteristically, Wallace expounded what were really his views on human values in quasi-biological terms. Certain traits in man, he felt, were instinctual. Now, since whatever was instinctual was natural, and whatever was natural was good, it followed that instinctual behavior was virtuous behavior. And since instinctual behavior thrived best in a natural setting, nobody was more likely to be virtuous than the farmer, which is why he was the salt of the earth.

In bits and fragments, Wallace pieced this argument together by discussing the relationship of specific instincts to rural life. One of these drives, for instance, was "the instinct for workmanship." By "workmanship" Wallace meant the kind of labor whose end product was tangible. People like painters and sculptors (who were most likely to have originated on farms, remember), carpenters and masons and, above all, farmers had much to be thankful for. Less fortunate were those people who traded in words, such as preachers, politicians and writers, or the businessmen and factory hands who sustained the commercial and industrial worlds. The crucial test was whether or not the end product could "be taken hold of" by its creator. For this reason there was no greater satisfaction than the knowledge that one's own hands were responsible for golden ears on drying stalks in the fields, and for hogs heavy with

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ July 11, 1924.

⁸ June 26, 1925.

food for man. Nobody could take that away from farmers, no matter what the level of prices.⁹

Indeed, apart from providing the obvious necessities of life, the only justification for work at all was to gratify this instinct. Yet here was one area where society was going awry, for nowadays increasing numbers of people worked solely to accumulate wealth. Wallace viewed this trend as a kind of disease that was hobbling the instincts, and thus undermining the very basis of society. Here, as usual, it was primarily the farmer who kept "affairs from going completely to smash. . . ." ¹⁰

Another of these instinctual drives was the desire to express warmth and affection, and this too was basically rural in occurrence.¹¹ Nobody who had ever witnessed the wonderful neighborliness of farmers could doubt this. "If you are sick in haying or threshing time," said Wallace, "Neighbors Jones, Smith and Brown turn out and help save the crop for you."¹² And if your wife should fall ill, one of the local farm wives was sure to appear to take over the household chores. He related the tale of a southwest-Iowa farmer who, though racked with influenza, still tried to get his work done. Before long, however, several of his neighbors showed up and took over, thus helping him through the crisis of corn-picking time. "When it comes to the pinch," he concluded, "they lived up to the country standard of 'good neighbors.' It is a high standard."¹³ Neighborliness, then, was the everyday way of expressing an innate need. It was a particularly rural trait, and it stood out in contrast to the crushing impersonality of the city.

Whenever Wallace held forth on country values, he almost inevitably got around to discussing individualism, which he cherished deeply. This commitment to individualism, however, involved him in the fundamental paradox of farm life during those years, for corn-belt farmers had become acutely sensitized to the implications of individual action in an age of economic organization. To a significant extent, in fact, their very awareness of the problem had been conditioned over the years by the educational activities of the Wallace family journal, and now young Henry was continuing the tradition admirably as a leader in organizing farmers to press for higher prices through federal legislation.¹⁴

⁹ September 26, 1931. Farmers themselves were rather more concerned with price levels than Wallace at this particular time, and perhaps somewhat less enraptured than he with the aesthetic aspects of their labor.

¹⁰ October 31, 1924. See also February 8, 1924, and June 19, 1925.

¹¹ February 8, 1924, and September 17, 1926.

¹² September 2, 1921.

¹³ November 28, 1924.

¹⁴ Wallace was an ardent proponent of the McNary-Haugen bill when that scheme was being buffeted about in Washington, and by the end of the decade he was beginning to give serious consideration to the domestic allotment plan.

But how could Wallace justify organizational techniques and federal assistance if he professed to value individualism? On the other hand, how could he cling to his dream of a world which prized the nonconformist when he knew that a surplus of economic nonconformity would bring disaster to the countryside?

Although he was quite aware of these questions, Wallace did not concede that they had him caught in a dilemma. He simply disengaged himself from criticism on this point by making a sharp distinction between individualism in the economic sphere and individualism in the social and intellectual spheres. The poles of the social order, he argued, were anarchy and socialism. All societies must contain elements of both. The real question, then, is not whether we should have anarchy or socialism, but how much and what kind of each we should have.¹⁵

For the time being, farmers would be wise to organize for economic "equality" without sacrificing their social and intellectual integrity. As long as the economy remained restrictionist, the "organized farmer has as much right to restrict his production judiciously as have business men and union leaders."¹⁶ Anyhow, the kind of individualism that was lost in economic organization was not to be lamented. It was, after all, not so much individualism as it was rapacity, and Wallace was never an apologist for the spectacle of economic cannibalism.

What amazed him was that there were actually economists who argued that the family farm should yield to the greater efficiency of the corporation farm. To Wallace's way of thinking this would have been a disaster, for such a development would only transmit to the countryside the robot-like existence of the cities.¹⁷ Fortunately, such a development was unlikely to occur because the family farmers would not stand for it. And it was a good thing for the nation that they would resist, too, since precious little was being done by anyone else to preserve individualism from the ubiquitous spread of homogenization. Looking to nature for his simile, he asserted that any attempt to impose rigid patterns of thought on man would be "like putting an eagle in a cage." Wallace saw the farmers here as "the last of the individualists," men who were fighting heroically to turn the tide which threatened to engulf our cities and towns in a sea of deadening uniformity. "To an extent, therefore," he said, "we think the farmer is fighting the battle of civilization."¹⁸

In stark contrast to the joys of country living stood the horrors of life in the city. Wallace's well of vitriol to describe cities never ran dry. Such

¹⁵ Wallace granted that "loud-mouthed blatherskites" were likely to be a by-product of freedom, but he felt that the greater danger would be to silence them, for then "we must run the risk of having a prophet gagged." September 3, 1926.

¹⁶ August 26, 1921.

¹⁷ June 19, 1925.

¹⁸ October 3, 1924.

phrases as "sterile and imitative" or "death chambers of civilization" came freely when he wrote about them. Naturally, he was puzzled by anyone who felt otherwise, but he was positively confounded by those misguided ruralites who yearned to move to the cities, for they did not have the excuse of invincible ignorance. "This ambition," he remarked, "is highly unnatural, by which we mean contrary to the inherent instincts of man. . . . Only neurotics who are keyed up to a high nervous pitch find this life satisfactory."¹⁹ Such images of abnormality and sickness, and of sterility and death, saturated his discussions of the city.

Because there were so many people, perhaps deluded by "the frills and ornaments" of urban life, who were drawn to the cities, Wallace felt impelled repeatedly to warn his readers of the perils of such folly. On occasion these sermons reached heights of eloquence that were matched only by his hymns of praise for the virtues of rural life. "We take [the farmer]," he said, "lock him up in a city, force him to breathe air tainted by thousands of his fellows, hosts of motor cars, myriads of smoke-belching chimneys. . . ." As he continued, the tones grew even more compelling:

We assault his ears with the racket of the street car, the auto, the newsboy; we insult his eyes with billboards and electric signs; we throw him into contact with a thousand new forces; and we get, as a result, a creature whose vitality is so low that his blood habitually dies out in three generations. So nature works.²⁰

Everything in his rhetoric here rings of artificiality and brutality. The farmer in question apparently did not *choose* to live in the city; he was *locked* in it. The rest followed from this act of constraint: we "force" him to breathe unnatural air; we "throw" him into unnatural situations; we "assault" his ears and "insult" his eyes. Was it any wonder that the product of all this abuse was not a man, but a creature? Such, however, were the consequences of putting natural man in an unnatural setting.

The city, then, was an aberration in the natural order, a gigantic social mistake which was both cause and effect of mental disorders, and an ominous malaise in any nation. Furthermore, it was conducive not only to emotional imbalance, but to physical debilitation as well. If the natural life in the country brought out all of man's natural vigor, then the artificial life of the city destroyed it. Wallace's illustration came, not unexpectedly, from nature itself:

Put the third generation of a wild animal, bred in the zoo, up against an animal of the same species that has never left his native environ-

¹⁹ June 6, 1924.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

ment, and you will have a splendid demonstration of what effect unnatural surroundings can have on vitality.²¹

This was not so much a metaphor for Wallace as it was a case study in the facts of life, a biological truism which applied as well to man as to any other animal. Thus, when he spoke of cities as "hot-houses," he pointed out that they produced a human being who was rendered incapable of reproducing himself.²²

And when he asked, "Are cities the cancers or flowers of modern civilization?" his regular readers knew that they were being inducted again into his class in social catechism. It could not have surprised them to hear that New York and Chicago were latter-day "Babylons" whose continued growth could only be explained as the result of a "diseased habit." Indeed, big cities were "cancerous growths" which now concerned the farmer "because he is a more or less healthy cell in the same body which is supporting the cancer."²³ On a different occasion, Wallace documented his views with evidence from the Great War. "Observers in England during the war," he informed his readers, "noted how small the undersized Londoners looked in the ranks beside battalions from the country." The same phenomenon was noted in a New York division of our own army, though with the added—and particularly American—twist here that "racial differences combined with the influence of the city to make for smaller size."²⁴ Thus, by demonstrating how racial runts affected the situation, Wallace revealed the full impact of negative quality on negative quantity.

The only encouraging feature about cities was that they bore the seeds of their own destruction. Readers of the *Farmer* were reminded of the urban civilizations of ancient times "which have been buried for centuries under the sands of Asia," and they were informed that if our own society ever grew too urban, as in fact it seemed to be doing, farmers of the future would be running their plows over its ruins, just as farmers had done in similar situations in the past.²⁵ In this imagery of the triumphant farmer literally growing his crops over a civilization which had strangled on its own unnatural appetites, Wallace disclosed the gravity of the struggle between the natural and the artificial, and he foretold also the inescapable outcome of that struggle.

All of this is not to say that Wallace wished somehow for the magical disappearance of cities, although there were times when he appeared ready to surrender to that delicious impulse. In his mind he made a distinction between cities per se and an urban civilization. Within reason,

²¹ April 14, 1922.

²² June 6, 1924.

²³ July 9, 1926.

²⁴ September 7, 1928.

²⁵ April 14, 1922.

cities were necessary, tolerable and in limited ways even desirable, but to key an entire civilization to their metabolism was suicidal. Our own society had swung too far toward urbanization, and now it was up to the farmers to reverse the process, for no one knew better than they that "no civilization can long endure which overrides the natural instincts of the bulk of the people."²⁶

This was all rather abstract, however. The city was, after all, more than a cancer, or a web of artificiality, or a destructive army of noxious chimneys. It was also a reflection of the kinds of people who lived in it, and Wallace never was timid about venting his wrath on these wretched creatures. Toward organized laborers, for instance, he unbridled his hostility because their greed played so large a role in the economic distress of Midwestern farmers. Wallace launched his crusade against labor early in the decade by pointing out how the interests of urban labor were opposed to those of farmers. His argument assumed that organized capital was the controlling influence in the economy. It had the power to determine who got how much. Using this power arbitrarily, businessmen had generously allocated to themselves about 40 per cent of the nation's prosperity, and had then allowed the unions to bludgeon them into surrendering nine-tenths of the remainder to city workers. Fundamentally, however, businessmen were only concerned with securing their own share. They really did not care very much how the rest was divided. If anything, they harbored considerable resentment toward unions, and would be gratified to see them stung for once. It was time, Wallace suggested, for farmers to take advantage of this ill will by throwing themselves behind the businessmen's efforts to cut wages. It would be just retribution for the avarice of labor, but, more important, it would allow businessmen to cut prices, thereby raising the real income of farmers.²⁷

A week later Wallace reworked this argument when he discussed the demands of railroad workers for higher wages and shorter hours. If the workers were allowed to have their way, the railroad owners would have no choice but to pass their increased costs on to the farmers in the form of higher freight rates. Such a development would be less than welcome to farmers, but they would be helpless to prevent it unless they were willing to reverse the pressures by securing drastic reductions in freight rates, "and then [leaving] it up to the railroads either to go into bankruptcy or to reduce wages sufficiently to keep themselves going."²⁸

²⁶ June 27, 1924.

²⁷ April 22, 1921.

²⁸ April 29, 1921. For a sampling of Wallace's attitudes toward labor during the 1920s, see editorials in the following issues of the *Farmer*: May 13, 1921; June 10, 1921; May 19, 1922; January 12, 1923; May 30, 1924; and April 23, 1926.

This demand for reduced rates was scarcely a novelty in the corn belt, of course, but it did involve a complete revision in the causal analysis of the problem. For decades farmers had blamed excessive rates on the greed of "the interests," and now they were being asked to re-examine their grievances, and to focus on organized labor as the villain.

Wallace's assaults on labor were frequent and shrill early in the decade when the farm depression was desperate. However, even after a flush of health returned to the farm economy, the antipathy remained, and he never relented completely. Always he hammered away at the argument that the greed and power-mongering of labor contributed mightily to the farmer's problems, and that the severity of the situation justified rural support for the efforts of urban businessmen to slash the unconscionably high wages of the nation's workers.

The problem with businessmen, in Wallace's view, was more complicated. To be sure, they also possessed the power to hurt the farmer economically, and they had used it in their successful efforts to block the McNary-Haugen bill, a maneuver which Wallace saw as an attempt to "exploit the farmer in order to feed the industrial worker cheaply. . . ."²⁹

Their real danger, however, was far more subtle and sinister. It lurked in their ethos, in a system of values which was now permeating American society. In a superficial way the flaws of businessmen were greed and chicanery. These qualities, needless to say, were evil enough, but to focus on the problem at this level would be to fix only on the symptoms. Behind these unwholesome characteristics there was a more dangerous business trait: the tendency to rely upon the profit motive as the mechanism to drive the American economy. Wallace seized every opportunity to flay businessmen for this.

Never did he feel himself more fully vindicated than when he tore into the mentality which had made the Teapot Dome scandal possible. "It is a libel on the human race," he fumed, "to assume that the hope of profit is necessary in order to make the industrial machine run."³⁰ He cited the great co-operatives of Europe and the United States as evidence that there were alternatives which were preferable to the profit motive because they did not "turn out a by-product of criminal and anti-social activity." There was corruption in government because there was corruption in business, and there was corruption in business because its practitioners had prostrated themselves blindly before the profit motive. "We will never get rid of the symptoms," he concluded, "until we get rid of the disease."³¹

²⁹ February 8, 1924.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ March 14, 1924.

Wallace's attacks on the profit-motive mentality brought him directly into conflict with the assumptions of classical economics, of course, but he was perfectly aware of this, and made no apologies for it. In fact, he bluntly asserted that the profit motive did not work at all to regulate our interests beneficently, but only nurtured graft, scandals and even wars.³²

In relating wars to the quest for profits, Wallace adopted a thorough-going economic analysis of imperialism. "Modern wars," he said, "are made by highly industrialized nations looking for undeveloped nations to exploit. . . ." ³³ The implications of his argument here were clear enough, if not explicit. As a highly industrialized nation, the United States was courting the danger of war if it undertook an adventurous policy of overseas investments. He frequently criticized the government for its Caribbean policy, and he fairly flogged it when the Marines occupied Nicaragua. It was a bitter irony, he noted, that this action, animated by the profit motive and designed in the interests of investment capital, was supported by the farmer's tax dollars.³⁴

As if Wallace did not have enough to cope with in the diverse sins of labor and capital, he had to contend with immigrants also. When he took control of the journal, Congress was close to passing a bill designed not only to restrict immigration, but to discriminate specifically against those immigrants from southern and eastern Europe. In an editorial supporting this legislation, Wallace lauded the farmers for favoring the bill. In doing so, he pointed out, they were sacrificing their immediate economic interest for a more far-reaching national outlook. After all, since most immigrants settled in the cities, their continued arrival here meant more mouths to feed, and more mouths to feed meant higher prices for the farmers. In addition, the immigrants provided a steady stream of cheap labor, which would mean lower costs for manufactured goods. If judged only on the grounds of economic expediency, therefore, the legislation was certainly no blessing for farmers. "Nevertheless," Wallace continued,

we feel that the farmer who is experienced in the breeding of grains and live stock has come to have a more genuine appreciation of hereditary characteristics than any other class of our nation. Even tho they lose money by it, farmers can see the peril of allowing the admission of large numbers of people of low grade intelligence from southern and eastern Europe. . . . If the farmer was the selfish individual which some people think that he is he would be clamoring vigorously for unrestricted immigration.³⁵

³² October 31, 1924.

³³ February 22, 1924.

³⁴ July 17, 1925.

³⁵ June 10, 1921. See also January 6, 1922.

Now, the temper of the times was such that Wallace, a widely-read man, probably drew these notions from the corpus of racist ideas that prevailed among many respected thinkers of the day. But Wallace's racism also fell neatly into line with his professional interests. After all, he was an agricultural geneticist who was intensely interested in experimenting with the "pedigree analysis" and "blood strains" of livestock to produce finer breeds. At the same time, he was a social critic who commonly justified his commitments in quasi-scientific terms. It was perfectly consistent of him, therefore, to infuse his discussions of human relationships with subtly wrought value judgments, and to disguise the process from even his own eyes as biology.

By the end of 1922, with the shadows of depression still hanging darkly over the countryside, Wallace began to shift his position. The economic argument for unfettered immigration, which once he had dismissed so lightly, now began to override all other considerations. Concerned with the rising costs of homegrown labor and the stagnation of domestic crop markets, Wallace urged that Congress reconsider the matter in such a way as to "encourage intelligent, able-bodied laborers to come to this country. . . ." ³⁶ Two months later he explained that a constant flow of cheap labor from abroad would discourage the exodus of rural laborers to the city. The result would be that farmers could "hold a larger number of [their] farm-hands back on the farm at a lower wage than would otherwise be possible."³⁷

In a crisis, then, Wallace was able to contain his distaste for the new immigrants. He even suggested, on one occasion, that immigrants be admitted solely on the grounds of mental and physical abilities rather than "race."³⁸ Yet his occasional references to aliens—sometimes specifically to Italians and Jews, or perhaps simply to "foreigners whose faces are darker and [whose] stature is shorter. . . ." ³⁹ leave little doubt that the aversion he felt toward them lingered on in him all through these years. He even argued that "The City's Greatest Debt to the Farm" (the title of an editorial) was the constant flow of ruralites into urban areas. If it were not for this, he suggested, the cities would soon be inhabited entirely by aliens, since native-born urbanites did not reproduce themselves. For this reason the origins and education of our children were supremely important, since "the blood and education with which they are equipped determines in the long run whether our civilization is going up or down."⁴⁰ The use of the word "blood" here was not fortuitous, but was used by Wallace commonly in this context to justify his racism. And

³⁶ November 10, 1922.

³⁷ January 12, 1923.

³⁸ October 15, 1926.

³⁹ November 5, 1926.

⁴⁰ May 9, 1924.

there was no mistaking his implication that if inferior blood were allowed to prevail, our civilization would decline.

However much Wallace abhorred the transformation of the United States from a rural to an urban society, he was no simple reactionary who yearned to turn back the clock to some idealized past where cities were barely tolerated as necessary harbors of evil in a sea of agrarian virtue. For one thing, he was too enraptured with the potential of modern technology to entertain an unqualified vision of primitivism triumphant.

Of all the products of the new technology, none intrigued him more than radio. As early as 1922, Wallace was suggesting that the time could be envisioned when poor roads and high railroad fares would no longer keep farmers away from market information or cultural events.⁴¹ By mid-decade, when it became clear that radio was not just a distant dream, but an imminent reality, Wallace's excitement developed into an addiction which he diagnosed as "Radioitis . . . a serious disease causing a high fever every evening and a temporary atrophy of the pocketbook."⁴²

Toward the movies Wallace was more hesitant. For their potential he was unreservedly enthusiastic. Thus he praised "The Covered Wagon" as a movie which put "into dramatic form the most important factor in American history, the influence of the frontier," for millions of Americans who might never "read the numerous and excellent books on the influence of the frontier on American civilization. . . ."⁴³ Such quality movies were of immeasurable value because, along with radios, automobiles and good roads, they were helping to break the iron grip of isolation and loneliness which had been the curse of farm life for so long, and to bring to the farmer the "finer things" of life. What worried Wallace was that there were too few good cultural and historical films, and too many like "Did She Slip—Or Was She Pushed?—A Drama of Sex and Society." For Wallace, who did not care at all whether she slipped or was pushed, the real challenge was to apply our intelligence in making films, and some discrimination in viewing them.

The impact on rural social life of these electronic marvels would undoubtedly be significant, but in Wallace's mind the new technology had much more profound implications, for in the productive power of the machine man had finally devised the means to bridge the gap between want and plenty. He was concerned, however, with our reluctance to use these modern techniques for social ends. So far, we had contented ourselves with a mindless multiplication of inventions to a point where inventiveness was threatening to degenerate into gadgetry, and productiv-

⁴¹ February 24, 1922.

⁴² February 1, 1924.

⁴³ June 26, 1925.

ity into instability.⁴⁴ This irony resulted from our failure to learn how to distribute all that we could produce without upsetting the economy. Instead of dealing imaginatively with this problem we had chosen to restrict production while people went cold and hungry. To Wallace this was "mad house logic."⁴⁵ Some years later he had occasion once again to refer to this "logic of the mad house," when the economy was plunging downward sickeningly because in 1929 "we had an oversupply of cotton goods, of houses, of automobiles, of shoes, of almost every other manufactured product. We had an oversupply of eggs, milk, pork, wheat, butter, and almost everything else."⁴⁶ And we had the nerve to speak of progress!

Persistently Wallace nagged at the mindlessness of our social processes. He deplored the deception by which we hid our greed behind the shibboleths of free competition, individualism and the profit motive. No doubt these had been admirable traits when we were first faced with opening up and developing a continent, but by now they had become obstacles in the path of further progress. The time had come for us to free the human spirit from the shackles of economic insecurity. This meant, of course, that we must divert our attention away from technological frippery, and redirect it toward social ends. Quoting Bertrand Russell, Wallace asserted that

If a majority in every civilized country so desired, we could, within twenty years, abolish all abject poverty, quite half the illness in the world, the whole economic slavery which binds down nine-tenths of our population; we could fill the world with beauty and joy, and secure the reign of universal peace.⁴⁷

However, the dream of human justice through economic planning was unlikely to materialize as long as men remained hypnotized by the liturgical chants to the false gods of competition and profit motive. It was primarily to break this bewitching spell that Wallace hurled his social thunderbolts throughout the 1920s. Our ultimate problem, he maintained, would be to discover and achieve "the durable satisfactions of life. . . ." This great challenge to the human imagination could only be met through "deliberate planning in the social field."⁴⁸

His proposals for social engineering, however, raised questions in Wallace's mind about the relation of planning to democracy. He pointed out,

⁴⁴ November 25, 1921, and October 13, 1922.

⁴⁵ May 9, 1924. Wallace defended his own demands for agricultural restrictionism as a necessary expedient in an economic system which the farmer had had no part in designing.

⁴⁶ February 14, 1931.

⁴⁷ June 13, 1924.

⁴⁸ May 22, 1925. See also July 10, 1925.

for instance, that the significance of a man like Mussolini was precisely in his assertion that dictatorship was a prerequisite for efficient social planning. It was up to us to meet this challenge by proving that we could "establish by democratic means the sort of social control that will keep the profiteer in bounds and raise the average well-being to the highest possible point. . . ." The ultimate question then is, "Can we have social efficiency and individual liberty in its best sense at the same time?"⁴⁹

Wallace desired passionately that we should, and he devoted more than passing thought to the realization of this goal. The one great hope, he asserted, lay in a co-operative mode of social organization. Along with most farmers, he viewed co-ops as a means of raising farm income, of course. Unlike most of them, however, he set his sights far beyond the level of prices when he discussed co-ops:

Just as free competition has yielded to combination, so combination will yield eventually to the co-operative control of industry. We believe . . . that a co-operative commonwealth is the distant end toward which we are working.

* * * * *

The kind of civilization we really want is one where rewards will be given to those who render some real service to their fellows. A society that overpays the speculator and the business trickster, and underpays the producer, is not one that any just man will want to see continued indefinitely. . . .

If we look to co-operation to cure this condition, we must look to it not as a device for creating a new type of combination or a new way of making profits, but as an economic system which appeals instead to the instinct of workmanship in man and to the desire to be of service to his fellows.⁵⁰

Co-operatives would be valuable to whatever extent they promoted a common desire among their members to share responsibilities, for only in this way could they create a framework of completely democratic control. This sense of mutuality must be the heart of local co-operative organization, and it should also be the way in which these locals coagulate into a national federation of co-ops. It would behoove farmers to remember, though, that higher profits were to be only a by-product of co-ops; their real purpose was to build a "rural civilization that will offer the greatest opportunities for the freest development of the human spirit."⁵¹

⁴⁹ April 2, 1926.

⁵⁰ February 8, 1924.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, and *passim* throughout these years. Wallace was especially fond of describing how the Danes had succeeded in making the co-operative idea work as something more than a mere scheme for pecuniary aggrandizement.

Throughout these years Henry Wallace held fast to essentially the same fundamental values. On the threshold of a political year which would propel him to national prominence in Washington, he was as certain of the superiority of rural life as he had been a dozen years earlier, when he had written his first editorials for the *Farmer*.⁵² Toward immigrants and laborers he remained unfriendly, if somewhat subdued, while his aversion to businessmen was only heightened by the trauma of a national depression. Nature remained his measure of virtue, artificiality his gauge of vice.

Yet there were important changes in him during these years. The Henry Wallace of 1921 lived in a world where American farmers were embattled by an army of people with evil designs. His mission at that time was to rally these farmers in the defense of virtue. By any standard he was already an idealist; by none was he yet a visionary.

More synoptic visions did begin to arrive within a few years, however, and they occurred with increasing frequency and urgency thereafter in the shape of a co-operative commonwealth. During 1924 and 1925 he poured out a series of articles and editorials on co-ops here and in Europe, pointing out not only how they had succeeded in the past but why they had to flourish in the future, for this was a matter of national survival to him.

Almost imperceptibly as his vision gained definition, his attitudes softened. His early views were characterized by the stridency of a man who was intolerant of injustice and impatient for change. Perhaps these harsh tones were only the harmonics of hard times, but that is doubtful since they were absent when times were much harder a decade later. By mid-decade he was shifting his attention away from specific types of people and toward such grander abstractions as the city, rural civilization and co-operative society. To be sure, these were shifts of degree only, yet their cumulative effect was to alter the very substance of his writings.

For Wallace, all problems—whether they involved the threat to individualism or the price of corn—were moral problems. As it became clear to him toward the end of the 1920s that these problems were not being solved, he turned his attention increasingly to the need for moral leadership. He seemed to be looking for someone who could lead the way to truth by the example of his own courage and vision. In an address before the Illinois Agricultural Association, a farm pressure group whose goals were much more modest than his own, he reminded his audience that the farmer's interests extended beyond mere costs and prices:

Farm civilization is not a matter merely of growing more corn and

⁵² January 23, 1932.

more hogs at less expense. Spiritual and esthetic values are a reality. They must be built into the background of our farm life in the same way as the Danes have built their folk lore in their rural high schools. . . . Our greatest need here in the corn belt . . . is a great teacher of spiritual values in terms which the farmer can understand.⁵³

While Wallace was willing temporarily to assume this educational burden, it became clear, in time, that he did not see himself as the "great teacher." Gradually he became more specific about the qualities he sought in his leader. By 1928, he was expressing the hope that a Ghandi would appear in the corn belt to persuade farmers, in terms of New Testament ideals, of the primacy of spiritual over material values.⁵⁴ He voiced this wish at a time when material well-being was reaching such a crest that even the farmers were being swept upward toward that long-awaited plateau of permanent prosperity. For Wallace, however, the need for a spiritual awakening transcended the relatively impermanent conditions of prosperity and depression. If anything, his sermons grew almost millenarian during the depression. "Empires rise and pass away," he said, "and ours may pass, too, if leadership does not soon arise proportionate to the needs of the time. *I am confidently expecting such leadership*, altho as yet *no sign* has appeared."⁵⁵ A month later he caught a brief glimpse of that sign, perhaps, when a dirt farmer wrote him a letter "to extol the power of 'beauty,'" and "not to complain about hard times. . . ." Wallace was deeply moved by the power of this humble idea, because it might "furnish us the equivalent in terms of Christianity of what Ghandi has given to India." Once more, imminence imparted urgency to his conclusion that "the time is rapidly getting ripe for someone to proclaim the superiority of the . . . immaterial things over the beastly injustices of these messy times."⁵⁶

These dozen years as editor had served as a kind of apprenticeship for Henry Wallace. Simultaneously they had initiated him into public life, and provided him with a platform from which he could test his ideas. They had also effected subtle but substantial changes in him. In 1921, like a crusader, he had been dominated by the need to vanquish the infidel on the field of battle. A decade later his zeal was muffled in an almost mystical shroud, but his optimism continued to shine through. By the time of Franklin Roosevelt's nomination in 1932, he had welded his ideals into a gospel, and was standing like an apostle impatiently awaiting the descent of the messiah. At the very least, he demonstrated a remarkable sense of timing.

⁵³ September 4, 1925. ⁵⁴ August 10, 1928.

⁵⁵ January 23, 1932. Italics mine.

⁵⁶ February 20, 1932.

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Divorce in the Progressive Era

DURING THE PROGRESSIVE YEARS THE DIVORCE RATE, WHICH HAD BEEN RISING steadily since the Civil War, attained critical dimensions. Consequently, Americans of this period took a graver view of the problem than any subsequent generation. Their varied responses proved to be decisive as far as the future of divorce itself was concerned, and they illuminate aspects of the Progressive Era which have received little attention from historians.

The precipitate growth of the divorce rate can be easily demonstrated. In 1880 there was one divorce for every twenty-one marriages; in 1900 there was one divorce for every twelve marriages; in 1909 the ratio dropped to one in ten, and by 1916 it stood at one in nine.¹ Naturally this dramatic increase in the divorce rate stimulated public alarm.

In 1881 the New England Divorce Reform League was established to conduct research on family problems, educate the public and lobby for more effective legislative curbs on divorce.² Under the leadership of Samuel Dike, a Congregational minister, the league enjoyed a long and useful life, but Dike's reluctance to advance legislative solutions to the divorce problem failed to deter others from resorting to politics.

Efforts to arrest the spread of divorce by legal means took two forms. State campaigns were waged to amend local divorce laws, and repeated attempts were made to achieve uniform marriage and divorce laws either through a constitutional amendment or through the voluntary enactment of uniform codes by the several states.³ Typical of the many local fights

¹ The definitive statistical study is Paul H. Jacobson, *American Marriage and Divorce* (New York, 1959). Two great government reports contain the raw materials—they are U. S. Bureau of Labor, *Marriage and Divorce 1867-1887* (1889), and the later more comprehensive U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Marriage and Divorce 1867-1906* (1909). Interesting contemporary analyses are contained in E. A. Ross, *Changing America* (New York, 1912) and William B. Bailey, *Modern Social Conditions* (New York, 1906).

² Its origins are described in an untitled autobiographical manuscript by Samuel Warren Dike in the Dike Papers, Library of Congress.

³ The legal and political history of divorce is described very fully in Nelson Manfred Blake, *The Road to Reno* (New York, 1962).

to alter state divorce laws was the successful battle in 1893 to end South Dakota's status as a divorce colony. After their admission to the Union in 1889 North and South Dakota retained Dakota Territory's generous ninety-day residence requirement. Sioux City, largest and most accessible town in the two states, soon developed a substantial divorce trade and gained national fame as a divorce colony. The resulting notoriety provoked local resentment which was mobilized by the return from Japan of the popular Episcopal Bishop William Hobart Hare, who in 1893 led Protestants, Catholics and Populists in an attack on the ninety-day residence requirement. The state legislature was successfully petitioned to extend the residence requirement to six months and the migratory divorce trade was diverted to North Dakota.⁴

The South Dakota campaign conformed to what was already an established pattern. It was led by conservative clergymen, supported by women's groups, and met little apparent opposition. Although these local campaigns did not succeed anywhere in abolishing divorce, they were part of a widespread tendency toward stricter divorce legislation.⁵ When such local crusades failed, it was usually because of public apathy, sometimes coupled with undercover resistance from commercial and legal interests which profited from the divorce trade.

Serious attempts to secure uniform marriage and divorce legislation through a constitutional amendment began in 1892 when James Kyle, the Populist Senator from South Dakota, introduced a joint resolution which read in full: "The Congress shall have the exclusive power to regulate marriage and divorce in the several states, Territories, and the District of Columbia."⁶ Senator Kyle's resolution died in committee as did all later resolutions, presumably because of a disinclination on the part of Congress to increase the power of the Federal government at the expense of the states.⁷

More popular, if equally unsuccessful, was the movement to secure voluntary uniformity through the drafting of model statutes which were to be enacted by the states. The most persistent of the organizations dedicated to this goal was the National Conference of Commissioners on

⁴ See M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *The Life and Labors of Bishop Hare* (New York, 1912), *passim*; Blake, "Divorce in South Dakota," *Nation*, IX (January 26, 1893), 61.

⁵ National League for the Preservation of the Family, *Some Fundamentals of the Divorce Question* (Boston, 1909). A pamphlet written by Samuel Dike and published by his organization, which had undergone two changes of name since its founding, deals with these changes at some length. They involved extending the time required to obtain divorces, and limiting the causes for which they could be granted.

⁶ U. S. Congressional Record, 52 Cong., 1st Sess. (February 3, 1892), p. 791.

⁷ See Senator Shortridge's candid remarks to this effect during hearings on a similar resolution years later. *Senate Judiciary Committee*, "Hearings on S. J. Res. 31" (November 1, 1921), *passim*.

Uniform State Laws, which met annually in connection with the American Bar Association. It was established by the Bar Association in 1889 to frame model codes on a wide range of subjects. The Commissioners were usually appointed by their state governors, and over the years drafted seven model statutes concerning marriage and divorce.⁸ However, few of the states demonstrated an interest in these models, and by 1916 the Commissioners were forced to admit that their approach had been a failure.

If the experience of the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws to 1906 had not been conclusive, the fate of the National Divorce Congress in that year was. A national meeting to draft uniform legislation had been talked about for years on the grounds that it would attract sufficient attention to succeed where the more diffident Commissioners had failed. In 1906 President Roosevelt was persuaded to request a new census study of marriage and divorce, and the interest aroused by this led Governor Pennypacker of Pennsylvania to call a national conference to draft model uniform legislation on these subjects. The Congress met twice, once in Washington to appoint committees, and again in Philadelphia to ratify the proposed statutes. The first meeting was attended by delegates from 42 of the 45 states and consisted largely of clergymen and lawyers, many of the latter having also been members of the NCCUSL. Despite the widespread approval which met their efforts, few states adopted their model statutes.⁹

The ant离婚 forces were also active within the established Protestant churches. During the Progressive Era repeated efforts were made in almost all the great Protestant denominations to stiffen their positions on divorce. The Episcopal Church, traditionally more hostile to divorce than most Protestant bodies, was in the van of this movement, thanks principally to William Croswell Doane, Bishop of Albany, New York. Doane was perhaps the most vocal and consistent enemy of divorce in the whole country. He favored prohibiting divorce altogether, and his activities within the Episcopal Church were directed at the canon which allowed the innocent party in an adultery suit to remarry. This canon was only slightly less severe than the refusal of the Roman Catholic Church to allow any divorced person to remarry, but it seemed dangerously lax to Doane and he regularly introduced an amendment which would have denied the sacraments to all divorced persons without exception.

⁸ "Secretary's Memorandum," *Proceedings of the 26th Annual Meeting of the NCCUSL* (1916).

⁹ See Blake, 140-45, and *Proceedings of the Adjourned Meeting of the National Congress on Uniform Divorce Laws* (Harrisburg, Pa., 1907).

In 1898 the House of Bishops, usually more conservative than the lower House, which included laymen, at the policy-making Triennial Convention, rejected Doane's amendment 31 to 24.¹⁰ In 1901 his amendment was defeated by a narrower margin, but in 1904 it passed the House of Bishops only to fail in the House of Deputies, whose members felt that it was too far removed from the spirit of the country.¹¹ Thereafter enthusiasm within the Episcopal church for the Doane amendment declined, and while it was re-introduced at later conventions, it failed to pass even in the House of Bishops. Similar efforts were made in the other Protestant denominations with what proved to be an equal lack of success.¹²

American attitudes toward marriage and divorce during the Progressive years must be seen in terms of the widespread fear of divorce demonstrated by these examples. It is not too much to say that there was a national crisis generated by divorce. It was a crisis to begin with because people believed it was. As Daniel Bell has demonstrated in his *The End of Ideology*, it is not necessary for activities seen to be antisocial actually to increase in order to create a crisis atmosphere—it is enough if people simply believe that such activities are increasing.¹³

An even better example perhaps was the white slave panic of 1912-13. If anything, prostitution was declining, but irrespective of the facts, widespread public alarm over this presumed social evil was triggered by local investigations and newspaper publicity.¹⁴

However, divorce actually was increasing by leaps and bounds. When one marriage in twelve ended in divorce, there were legitimate grounds for concern. These were crucial years for divorce, finally, because the Progressive period was the last time when public opinion could reasonably have been expected to support genuinely repressive action. With the 1920s and the advent of the revolution in morals the opportunity to abolish or seriously restrict divorce was lost forever. Some of the anti-divorce leaders sensed that time was running out for them, and this awareness gave their strictures an urgent tone which became more shrill with the years.

Although divorce had political, psychological and other dimensions,

¹⁰ "The Canon on Marriage and Divorce," *Public Opinion*, October 27, 1898.

¹¹ "Remarriage After Divorce," *Outlook*, October 22, 1904.

¹² The positions of the principal denominations on divorce and the efforts to change them are summarized in James P. Lichtenberger, *Divorce: A Study in Social Causation* (New York, 1909), chap. vii.

¹³ Daniel Bell, "The Myth of Crime Waves" (New York, 1961), pp. 151-74.

¹⁴ Roy Lubove, "The Progressives and the Prostitute," *The Historian*, XXIV (May 1962), 308-29.

the increase of divorce was usually seen as a moral and social problem.¹⁵ It is difficult, if indeed not actually pointless, to try to determine which of these two aspects alarmed critics of divorce the most. The enemies of divorce invariably regarded it as both immoral and antisocial. Since most opponents of divorce were either clergymen or strongly religious people, it seems fair to assume that the moral side of the divorce question was what first engaged their attention, but having once declared divorce to be immoral, there is little more one can say in that direction, and most of the serious attacks on divorce emphasized its antisocial character.¹⁶

The attack on divorce hinged on the common belief that divorce destroyed the family, which was the foundation of society and civilization. Theodore Schmauk, editor of the *Lutheran Church Review*, President of the Lutheran General Council and a leading theologian, characterized the family as "the great and fundamental institution in social life."¹⁷ *The Catholic World* in an attack on H. G. Wells' view of divorce felt that it had demolished his position when it observed that Wells failed to see that the family "was the cradle of civil society."¹⁸ Lyman Abbott, an influential Progressive editor and associate of Theodore Roosevelt, once charged a prominent divorcee with being "the worst type of anarchist" because divorce, like anarchy, threatened to destroy society altogether.¹⁹ President Roosevelt, in addressing Congress on the need for uniform legislation, described marriage as being "at the very foundation of our social organization. . . ."²⁰ Marriage and the family are, of course, quite different institutions, but the critics of divorce did not usually distinguish between them.

¹⁵ Generalizations of this sort which depend upon a close acquaintance with the popular literature are notoriously hard to document. My own conclusions are derived from an examination of almost everything dealing with marriage and divorce published either in book form or in more than thirty leading periodicals from 1889 through 1919. For details see my unpublished, "The Divorce Crisis of the Progressive Era" (Doctor's dissertation, Berkeley, Calif., 1963).

¹⁶ By dismissing the moral side of the opposition to divorce so casually I do not mean to imply that it was not important, but only that it was unremarkable and required no detailed analysis. Divorce was considered immoral because it was forbidden by the New Testament, and because it encouraged lust. Naturally the clergymen who opposed divorce supported themselves with Scriptural citations. One of the most elaborate efforts to relate divorce to licentiousness was Samuel Dike's first major address on the subject, reprinted in *Christ and Modern Thought: The Boston Monday Lectures 1880-81*, ed. Joseph Cook (Boston, 1882).

¹⁷ "The Right to Be Divorced," *Lutheran Church Review*, XXVIII (October 1909), 661.

¹⁸ W. E. Campbell, "Wells, the Family, and the Church," *Catholic World*, XCI (July 1910), 483.

¹⁹ "The Worst Anarchism," *Outlook*, August 11, 1906, p. 826.

²⁰ Bureau of the Census, *Marriage and Divorce 1867-1906*, p. 4.

Felix Adler took this contention a step further when he insisted that divorce menaced "the physical and spiritual existence of the human race. . . ." ²¹ Adler was in some ways a surprising figure to find on this side of the divorce question. The founder of Ethical Culture and a leading advocate of liberal religion, he consistently attacked dogma and orthodoxy and supported a wide variety of social reforms.²² He had earlier supported divorce, but by 1915 had changed his mind and accepted the point, usually advanced by the theologically orthodox, that divorce had to be suppressed as a matter of social survival. His conversion showed how this argument operated independently of its conservative religious base, and helps to explain why some enemies of divorce attached such importance to their campaign. One could hardly play for higher stakes.

A related theme which engaged the attention of divorce critics was the role of woman. It was generally believed that the family was woman's special responsibility and its protection her primary concern. Moreover women were thought to be more active than men in securing divorces (and they probably were since about two-thirds of all divorces were awarded to women). *The North American Review* reflected this point of view when it entitled one of its divorce symposiums, "Are Women to Blame?"²³ The *Review's* female panelists charged women with responsibility for the divorce rate, and accused them of being spoiled, romantic, impatient, jealous of men and usurpers of the male's time-honored functions. Many of these women were successful writers, as was Anna B. Rogers, a popular essayist, who repeated the same charges in her book, *Why American Marriages Fail*, nineteen years later.²⁴

While the critics of divorce, especially the men, were inclined to argue that women were really happier when they stayed at home and held the family together, the more tough-minded accepted the fact that the woman's traditional role was often painful and difficult.²⁵ Few had a clearer picture of what was involved than the respected novelist Margaret Deland. Mrs. Deland was a warm supporter of many Progressive causes and a woman with courage enough to defend the rights of unwed mothers in Victorian Boston. But she believed that civilization "rests on the

²¹ *Marriage and Divorce* (New York, 1915), p. 15.

²² Henry Neumann, *Spokesmen for Ethical Religion* (Boston, 1951), deals with Adler's career at some length.

²³ Rebecca Harding Davis, Rose Terry Cooke, Marion Harland, Catherine Owen, Amelia E. Barr, *North American Review*, CXLVIII (May 1889).

²⁴ Boston, 1909.

²⁵ Among the frequent male efforts to sentimentalize over the role and nature of woman were Lyman Abbott, *Christianity and Social Problems* (Boston, 1896), and Robert Lawton, *The Making of a Home* (Boston, 1914).

permanence of marriage."²⁶ For this reason women dared not turn to divorce, for it would mean the end of everything. "If we let the flame of idealism be quenched in the darkness of the senses," she cried, "our civilization must go upon the rocks."²⁷ Even adultery was no excuse for giving up the fight, she continued, because men were instinctively promiscuous and their lapses from grace had to be tolerated for the sake of the greater good.

Implicit in these arguments was the belief that the individual was less important than the group. Most opponents of divorce agreed that divorce was part of an unwholesome tendency toward a "dangerous individualism." Margaret Deland bewailed the absence of team-play among women and Professor Lawton called frankly for the "suppression of the individual in favor of the community."²⁸ Samuel Dike in his Cook Lecture attributed divorce to the rising tide of individualism menacing all progressive societies, while Felix Adler as early as 1890 was tracing the whole ugly business back to Rousseau's "false democratic ideals."²⁹ Although, as we shall see, most leading sociologists believed in divorce, Charles A. Ellwood did not. This future president of the American Sociological Society, despite his Progressive sympathies, also attributed divorce to excessive individualism.³⁰ Francis Peabody, an eminent theologian and student of the Higher Criticism, believed that the family's major enemies were scientific socialism and "the reactionary force of self-interested individualism. . . ."³¹

The opponents of divorce were more varied and had much more to say than I have been able to indicate, but the foregoing gives at least some idea of who they were and what they thought. The defenders of divorce, by way of contrast, were fewer in number and easier to locate. Opinion against divorce was so widespread and diffuse that it cannot be attributed to a handful of groups, but the sentiment favoring divorce was largely confined to sociologists, liberal clergymen and feminists. The defenders of divorce, like its enemies, viewed the problem primarily in moral and social terms. But unlike the critics of divorce, its supporters, who were with few exceptions liberals, were much more interested in the morality of divorce and more inclined to see its moral and social dimensions as too interrelated for separate discussion and analysis.

²⁶ "The Change in the Feminine Ideal," *Atlantic Monthly*, CV (March 1910), 295; see also her interesting autobiography *Golden Yesterdays* (New York, 1940).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

²⁸ *The Making of a Home*, p. 594.

²⁹ "The Ethics of Divorce," *Ethical Record*, II (April 1890), 207.

³⁰ *Sociology and Modern Social Problems* (New York, 1913).

³¹ *Jesus Christ and the Social Question* (New York, 1903), p. 145.

The case for divorce gained initial momentum in the 1880s and 1890s when a trickle of protest against Victorian marriage began to make itself heard. The plays of Henrik Ibsen, especially *A Doll's House* (1879) and *Ghosts* (1881), were affecting English audiences in the late 1880s and American opinion somewhat later. By the 1890s a number of Englishmen were attacking marriage and the views of Mona Caird and Grant Allen became well known in the United States through their own writings, and through the publicity given their ideas by the American press. Mona Caird was a feminist whose essays appeared for the most part in high-quality limited circulation periodicals. Her most controversial proposal was an attempt to substitute for divorce short-term marriage contracts whose expiration would leave both parties free to separate or to negotiate a new contract.³²

Grant Allen's best-known statement on the question was a sensational novel boosting feminism and free love entitled *The Woman Who Did*.³³ Allen was really calling for an end to marriage altogether, but his polemics against the institution supported divorce as much as free love. Within a few years the radical attack on marriage enlisted such big guns as H. G. Wells, who in a characteristically exuberant preview of the future in 1901 announced that monogamy was dissolving and sexual standards relaxing to the point where in a hundred years the present moral code "would remain nominally operative in sentiment and practice, while being practically disregarded. . . ." ³⁴ Marriage was also under fire from the new moralists like the mystical Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis and his wife Edith, and the South African feminist Olive Schreiner, among others.³⁵

The effect of this stream of marriage propaganda was to invigorate and inspire those Americans who believed in the right to divorce. Few respectable Americans were prepared to go as far as new moralists like Wells and Carpenter, but a substantial number of liberals were be-

³² *The Morality of Marriage and Other Essays on the Status and Destiny of Women*, London, 1897. A collection of articles which had previously appeared in the *North American Review*, the *Fortnightly Review*, the *Westminster Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*. Typical of the American press's treatment of her ideas are "The Millennium of Marriage—Mona Caird's Views," *Current Literature*, XVI (July 1894), reprinted from the *Boston Herald*. "The Practice of Marriage," *Current Literature*, XVIII (October 1895), reprinted from the *Saturday Review*.

³³ Boston, 1895.

³⁴ "Anticipations; An Experiment in Prophecy—II," *North American Review*, CLXXIII (July 1901), 73-74.

³⁵ Carpenter, *Love's Coming of Age* (New York, 1911). *Little Essays of Love and Virtue* (New York, 1921), summarized the ideas Havelock Ellis had been advocating for years and the *New Horizon in Love and Life* (London, 1921), contains the thoughts of his wife, who died in 1916. Schreiner, *Woman and Labor* (New York, 1911).

ginning to feel that traditional marriage was needlessly tyrannical and repressive, that it discriminated against women, and that divorce was not only an escape hatch for abused women, but offered real opportunities for a reform of the whole marriage system. At the bottom of most, if not all, of this sentiment was the feminist impulse, for most divorce liberals were acutely conscious of the usefulness of divorce as an instrument for the emancipation of women.

Unlike the new moralists whose feminism was concerned with freeing women for a fuller sex life, the American feminist was inclined to defend divorce because it freed women from sex. Benjamin O. Flower, who edited the populistic *Arena*, called for easier divorce laws as a way of protecting women from the excessive sexual appetites of their husbands. He argued that the common prostitute was "far freer than the wife who is nightly the victim of the unholy passion of her master. . . ." ³⁶ By 1914 this argument had become so familiar that it was thought fit for the respectable readers of the cautious *Good Housekeeping* magazine. In that year Jesse Lynch Williams, feminist and playwright, asked rhetorically, "is allowing herself to be owned body and soul by a man she loathes doing right?" before going on to delicately suggest "that seems rather like a dishonorable institution more ancient than marriage." ³⁷

Many feminists contended that not only did traditional marriage make women the sexual victims of their husbands, but it also exaggerated the importance of sex by denying women the chance to develop their other traits of character through work and education, and by forcing them to compete in the marriage market largely on the basis of their sexual attractions. The most desirable women had the best marital opportunities and so, through a kind of natural selection, sexuality prospered at the expense of other attributes. Divorce, along with expanded opportunities for education and employment, was a way of combatting this pernicious tendency.³⁸

If the impulse to defend divorce came first from feminists who agreed with Elizabeth Cady Stanton on the need for a "larger freedom in the marriage relation," social scientists performed a crucial service in coping

³⁶ "Prostitution Within the Marriage Bond," *Arena*, XIII (June 1895), 68.

³⁷ "The New Marriage," *Good Housekeeping*, LII (February 1914), 184.

³⁸ Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics* (Boston, 1898), was an especially influential exposition of this point of view. For other information on this remarkable woman's life and work see Carl N. Degler's appreciative article, "Charlotte Perkins Gilman on the Theory and Practice of Feminism," *American Quarterly*, VIII (Spring 1956). See also Rheta Childe Dorr, *What Eight Million Women Want* (Boston, 1910), and C. Gasquoine Hartley, *The Truth About Women* (London, 1914).

with the public's fear of the social consequences of divorce.³⁹ The first man of stature to defend divorce was Carroll Wright, U.S. Commissioner of Labor Statistics and a self-trained social scientist, who at the national Unitarian convention in 1891 boldly declared himself for liberal divorce laws. A few years later he wrote:

The pressure for divorce finds its impetus outside of laws, outside of our institutions, outside of our theology; it springs from the rebellion of the human heart against that slavery which binds in the cruellest bonds human beings who have by their haste, their want of wisdom, or the intervention of friends, missed the divine purpose as well as the civil purpose of marriage.⁴⁰

But it was not until 1904 that a leading professionally trained social scientist joined the fight. In his massive *A History of Matrimonial Institutions* and subsequent writings George E. Howard, an eminent historian and sociologist, tried to show how the divorce rate was the product of forces which were dramatically improving American society.⁴¹ He argued that industrialization, urbanization and the other pressures which were breaking up the old patriarchal family produced not only more divorces, but a new kind of marriage marked by higher spiritual standards and greater freedom. Closing with the problem of individualism which so alarmed the enemies of divorce, he declared that the growing power of the state was tending to make the individual and not the family the functional unit of society and that this process not only freed the individual from familial authoritarianism but elevated the family by abolishing its coercive power and transforming it into a "spiritual and psychic association of parent and child based on persuasion."⁴²

Within a few years Wright and Howard were joined by a host of social

³⁹ "Divorce vs. Domestic Warfare," *Arena*, I (April 1890), 568. Alone of the great feminist leaders, Mrs. Stanton was a lifelong supporter of divorce, and in her later years it became one of her major interests. In this respect she was hardly a typical feminist, for while most divorce liberals were also feminists, they remained very much a minority within the women's movement.

⁴⁰ *Outline of Practical Sociology* (New York, 1900), p. 176.

⁴¹ Chicago, 1904.

⁴² "Social Control and the Function of the Family," Congress of Arts and Sciences, *Proceedings*, VII (St. Louis, 1904), 701. This abbreviated summary may not bring out the markedly utopian flavor which permeated discussions on the family by liberal sociologists and feminists during the Progressive period. Indeed, they entertained hopes for the future of the family which seem fantastically imaginative by the standards of our own more somberly clinical age. This visionary strain in Progressive social thought has been underestimated by historians in recent years, especially by Richard Hofstadter, whose influential *The Age of Reform* (New York, 1955), ignores the role played by feminism and the new morality in shaping the Progressive mood.

scientists including most of the leading men in the field.⁴³ The weight of sociological opinion was solidly on the side of divorce by 1908 when the American Sociological Society devoted its third annual meeting to the family.⁴⁴ President William G. Sumner, the crusty, aging president of the society who had done so much to establish sociology as an academic discipline, opened the proceedings by observing gloomily that "the family has to a great extent lost its position as a conservative institution and has become a field for social change."⁴⁵ The program of the convention confirmed Sumner's fears for virtually every paper described the changes affecting the family, called for more changes, or did both. Charlotte P. Gilman read a paper summarizing her *Women and Economics*, and a group of papers dealt with the damage inflicted on the family by urban, industrial life.⁴⁶

The high point of the meeting was George Howard's, "Is the Freer Granting of Divorce an Evil?" Howard repeated his now familiar views and touched off a controversy which showed the drift of professional opinion.⁴⁷ He was attacked by Samuel Dike, who insisted that divorce was produced by a dangerous individualism and the decline of ideals, and by Walter George Smith. Smith was a prominent Catholic lawyer who had advocated stricter divorce laws for many years and was a leader in the campaign for uniform divorce legislation. His criticisms stressed divorce's incompatibility with orthodox religion and he accused Howard of condoning a social revolution that destroyed the divinely constituted order of things. Nothing, he declared, could alter the fact of feminine inferiority. Howard replied that marriage was a purely social institution "to be freely dealt with by men according to human needs."⁴⁸

⁴³ So many statements were made on marriage and divorce by sociologists during these years that I can list only a few of them here. Walter F. Willcox, *The Divorce Problem* (New York, 1891), was a seminal monograph that laid the statistical base for most later studies of divorce, but which was not well known outside of the profession and did not have the impact of other works which were more widely publicized. Elsie Clews Parsons, *The Family* (New York, 1906), caused a minor sensation by calling for trial marriages. Mrs. Parsons was a student of Franz Boas and the most radical of the academicians who dealt with the problem. Arthur W. Calhoun, *A Social History of the American Family, From the Civil War* (Cleveland, 1919), Vol. III, was written from an avowedly socialist point of view and is still the only comprehensive work on the history of the American family.

⁴⁴ *Papers and Proceedings of the American Sociological Society*, III (Chicago, 1909).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁴⁶ "How Home Conditions React Upon the Family," *Papers . . . of American Sociological Society*, pp. 16-29. Margaret F. Byington, "The Family in a Typical Mill Town," pp. 73-84. Edward T. Devine, "Results of the Pittsburgh Survey," pp. 85-92; Charles R. Henderson, "Are Modern Industry and City Life Unfavorable to the Family?" pp. 93-105, among others.

⁴⁷ *Papers . . . of American Sociological Society*, pp. 150-60.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

Despite this unusually spirited clash, Smith and his friends were making an illusory show of strength. The moralistic flavor of their language, so different in tone from Howard's, revealed their professional isolation. Theirs was the faintly anachronistic rhetoric of a discredited tradition of social criticism. The opponents of Howard's position were, moreover, all laymen with the exception of President Sumner and Albion Small, while on his side were ranged most of the speakers, including E. A. Ross, James Lichtenberger and other leading scientists. As a profession then, sociology was committed to a positive view of divorce at a time when virtually every other organized group in the country was opposed to it. But although heavily outnumbered, the sociologists were the only people who could claim to speak on the problem with expert authority, and in the Progressive Era expertise was coming to be highly valued. As experts, the social scientists conferred respectability on the cause of free divorce at the same time as they did much to allay public anxiety over its effects.

A final problem that remained for the divorce liberals was finding some way to weaken the general conviction that divorce was forbidden by the Bible, and to diminish the impact of the clergy's opposition to divorce. It was here that the handful of liberal ministers who supported divorce performed a signal, and indeed indispensable, service. Simply by saying that divorce was a morally acceptable device, the liberal ministers endowed it with a certain degree of legitimacy. If supporting divorce with their moral prestige was the more important function performed by the liberal ministers, some went beyond this and effectively disputed the traditional charge that the Bible specifically prohibited divorce.

One of the most impressive statements of the liberal position was delivered by William G. Ballantine, classicist, Bible scholar, onetime president of Oberlin College and for twenty years editor of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*. Ballantine argued that "even if all thoughtful Christian men were today united in a resolute purpose of conformity to the letter of Scripture the path of duty would be far from plain."⁴⁹ He pointed out that a Biblical injunction against divorce cited by Bishop Doane in a recent magazine article appeared in the same passage as the admonition to resist evil. How, he asked, were Christians to know which commandment to obey and which to ignore? Ballantine described the life of Jesus as a struggle against Talmudic literalism:

During His whole life, He fought against the tyranny of mere words, and for the lordship of the present living spiritual man. In his dis-

⁴⁹ "The Hyperbolic Teachings of Jesus," *North American Review*, CLXXIX (September 1904), 403.

course He suggested great truths by parables, by questions, by metaphors, by paradoxes, by hyperboles, by every device that could elude the semblance of fixed judicial formulas. It is the irony of history that such language should be seized upon for statute law.⁵⁰

Other scholars, theologians and Higher Critics attacked the presumed Biblical sanctions against divorce in different ways, but the effect of their work was to undercut the general belief that the Bible clearly forbade divorce.⁵¹

On a more popular level the Rev. Minot J. Savage declared that as love was the essence of marriage two people who no longer loved each other had every reason to get divorced.⁵² This same conviction informed the writings of John H. Holmes, a great civil libertarian and advocate of liberal Christianity, who believed that the passing of love destroyed marriage in fact if not in name.⁵³

Gradually the climate of opinion began to change. As noted earlier there was a substantial organized opposition to divorce during the Progressive period, but despite local victories, the movement to retard divorce by legal and political means was resoundingly unsuccessful. There were other signs which demonstrated that attitudes were being modified. Samuel Dike died in 1913 and his League expired shortly thereafter. It was essentially a one-man operation, but it was supported by the enemies of divorce, whose financial contributions had declined sharply even before his death, to the point where receipts after 1910 were about half of what they had been in the 1890s.⁵⁴ The Committee on the Family which was routinely formed by the Federal Council of Churches in 1911 was singularly inactive, and in 1919 it was dropped altogether.⁵⁵

At the same time the solid wall of opposition to divorce maintained by the nation's press was repeatedly breached. Before 1900 no important American magazine defended the right to divorce except the radical *Arena*. Articles favorable to divorce were very rare in the general press. After about 1900, however, a few bold magazines like the *Independent* endorsed the right of divorce editorially, and many more began to print

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

⁵¹ E.g., Ernest D. Burton, "The Biblical Teaching Concerning Divorce," *Biblical World*, XXIX (February and March 1907). Norman Jones, "Marriage and Divorce: The Letter of the Law," *North American Review*, CLXXXI (October 1905). Thomas S. Potwin, "Should Marriage Be Indissoluble?" *New Englander and Yale Review*, LVI (January 1892).

⁵² *Men and Women* (Boston, 1902).

⁵³ *Marriage and Divorce* (New York, 1913).

⁵⁴ *Annual Reports* of the National League for the Protection of the Family.

⁵⁵ *Annual Reports* of the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America.

occasional articles defending divorce. The *North American Review*, which was more interested in the problem than any other major periodical, began the new century with a rousing attack on the opponents of divorce by the aging but still magnificent Elizabeth Cady Stanton.⁵⁶ Other magazines, too numerous to mention, also began to print articles favoring divorce. Even the uncompromisingly hostile *Outlook* unbent to this extent, and in 1910 it conceded editorially that there were times when divorce was permissible.⁵⁷ This shift influenced popular as well as serious magazines. In 1910 the slick monthly *World's Work* announced that "The True View of Increasing Divorce" was that the divorce rate was not alarming, and that divorces should not be subject to excessive restrictions.⁵⁸

Obviously the changes in public opinion which these articles represented did not constitute a general recognition of the desirability of divorce. Although a few journals accepted the liberal argument that divorce was a therapeutic social mechanism, most did not. In many cases nothing more was involved than the admission that there were probably two sides to the question. This of itself, however, was a form of moral relativism on the issue which would have been unthinkable in the 1890s. This new tolerance of divorce coincided with the eruption of a number of curious phenomena like the dance craze and the white slave panic which marked the onset of the revolution in morals.⁵⁹

Divorce was a part of the complex transformation of moral values and sexual customs which was to help give the 1920s their bizarre flavor. It was not only the most visible result of this vast social upheaval, but in many ways it was the most compatible with traditional modes of thought. It was, on the whole, an orderly, public and institutionalized process which took due account of the formal difference between right and wrong, guilt and innocence. It had the blessings of the highest sociological authorities, and it was recommended by many feminists as a cure for the brutalizing sexual indignities known to occur in some marriages. Conservatives could, therefore, more easily resign themselves to divorce than to other, more extravagant, demonstrations of the changing moral order.

Although divorce has today assumed proportions undreamed of in the Progressive Era, the nature of the American response to mass divorce

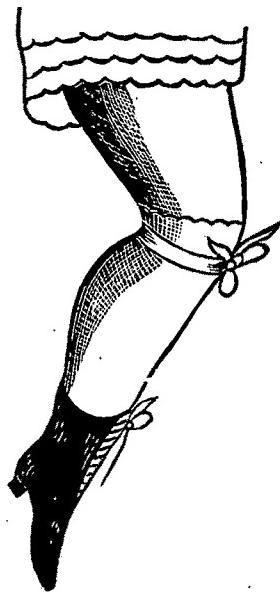
⁵⁶ "Are Homogeneous Divorce Laws in all the States Desirable?" *North American Review*, CLXX (March 1900).

⁵⁷ E. R. Stevens, "Divorce in America: The Problem," *Outlook*, June 1, 1907; "Just Grounds for Divorce," November 23, 1910.

⁵⁸ *World's Work*, XIX (January 1910).

⁵⁹ Henry F. May, *The End of American Innocence* (New York, 1959), II, Part IV, 333, 343-44.

was determined at that time. Between 1905, when the magnitude of divorce as a social problem had become fully apparent, and 1917, when the movement to limit or direct the spread of divorce had clearly failed, something of importance for American social history had occurred. This was the recognition by moral conservatives that they could not prevent the revolution in morals represented by mass divorce. Their failure of morale in the immediate prewar period paved the way for the spectacular changes which took place after the war.



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George Caleb Bingham: The Artist as Social Historian

ART, WROTE GEORGE CALEB BINGHAM IN 1871, "IS THE MOST EFFICIENT hand-maid of history." For art possesses the "power to perpetuate a record of events with a clearness second only to that which springs from actual observation."¹

Bingham's own paintings have come, in recent years, to receive the profound and widespread appreciation that they have long deserved. Yet the focus of this re-evaluation has been the purely artistic qualities of his work. Less often discussed, though at least dimly perceived by many critics, is its value for American social history—the very thing which Bingham himself would have emphasized most. On one occasion he declared it his special purpose to "assure . . . that our social and political characteristics as daily and annually exhibited will not be lost in the lapse of time for want of an Art record rendering them full justice."²

In this he was remarkably successful. Though born in Virginia, Bingham moved with his family to Missouri when still a young boy, and remained there for the rest of his days. And as representations of the life of this region, both in its surface aspects and in depth, his paintings are in a class by themselves. This was, indeed, recognized by some of his contemporaries. The Missouri press in the 1840s and 1850s appraised Bingham's work many times, almost invariably expressing great delight at the accuracy and understanding of all that the artist attempted to convey. Of the rivermen paintings, for instance, the *Missouri Republican* had this to say: "Mr. Bingham seems to have studied their character very closely, with the eye and genius of an artist, and the mind of a philosopher. He has seized the characteristic points, and gathered up their expressive features, and transferred them to his canvas with a truthfulness

¹ Quoted in John Francis McDermott, *George Caleb Bingham: River Portraitist* (Norman, Okla., 1959), p. 170.

² See "Letters of George Caleb Bingham to James S. Rollins," ed. C. B. Rollins, in *Missouri Historical Review*, XXXII, 170.

which strikes every observer."³ The political paintings elicited the same sort of comment, viz.: "All who have seen a county election in Missouri are struck with the powerful accumulation of incidents in so small a space, each one of which seems to be a perfect duplication from one of these momentous occasions in real life."⁴

The reason for the extraordinary power of Bingham's work as social history is not hard to discover. Bingham knew and loved his world well, yet he maintained at the same time an unusually objective point of view about it. He possessed that kind of sympathy which enables an artist to feel his way into his subject matter, yet also to reflect it without distortion. As one critic has aptly remarked, "Bingham did not intrude upon his work. . . . It [was] his concern to present and not to judge."⁵ He lets his subjects speak and act for themselves; his own personal ideas and idiosyncrasies are not permitted to interfere. He had no messages, no "interpretations" to put across. His aim was never to praise or criticize men, but rather simply to study them.

In regard to subject, Bingham's work falls into two main categories: what may be called the paintings of "town society," and also those of "river society." This dichotomy mirrored the actual circumstances of the time and place in which the artist lived.

Bingham himself belonged, indisputably, to the life of the town. The importance of towns and cities—of small but essentially "urban" communities—in the growth of the West has recently been a matter of considerable discussion among American historians. Study of the nation's westward expansion began around 1900 with the enormously influential work of Frederick Jackson Turner. Since that time western history has been explored in much detail by a great number of scholars. The Turner school has, however, tended to emphasize the rough, the uncivilized, the "pioneer" elements in western development. In the past few years some historians have wished to redress this imbalance (if, indeed, imbalance it be). Their findings are designed to show that there was a rapid and substantial growth of towns throughout the Old West; and that these communities played a significant part in the life of the whole region.⁶

Bingham's paintings fit nicely with the latter point of view. It may be said at the outset that his own home of Franklin, Missouri, was an excellent example of the aforementioned "type" of the frontier town. Starting in about 1816, it grew at an extremely fast rate, and by the mid-1820s was

³ Quoted in McDermott, p. 62.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁶ See, for example, Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier* (Cambridge, 1959).

a vigorous little urban community, providing important services for a large area of the surrounding countryside, yet maintaining its own town values and way of life.

The men whom Bingham painted into his work were, in many cases, substantial townfolk. The "checker-players," for instance, are hardly pioneer figures, in the traditional sense of that word. Their dress—vest, elaborate cravat and long broadcloth coat—suggests considerable means and a certain urbanity as well. They are probably lawyers or merchants. Likewise, the main street pictured in the background of *The Verdict of the People* is no straggling village wagon-trace. The artist has portrayed a number of fairly large frame houses, and the hotel immediately behind the courthouse has definite architectural pretensions. In the *Stump Orator*, an early painting by Bingham which has not come to light in our own day, a newspaper reporter seems to have been prominently featured. In any case, there does survive in Bingham's sketchbook a careful drawing of such a figure, neatly dressed and hard at work taking notes. Franklin, Missouri, to be sure, supported a newspaper regularly after 1819.

Finally, there is in the political studies some evidence of class distinction—a phenomenon closely bound up with urban development. It is quite apparent that the audience in *Stump Speaking* contains men from varying circumstances. Contrast, for example, the stately, top-hatted gentleman at the far right with the seated figures in the center of the painting. Western class structure was, of course, extremely pliant, by contrast to that of older societies. Money was its primary criterion. Hence there was a high degree of vertical mobility, and communication between men of all different conditions was unrestricted. Still, there did arise in every western town a nucleus of "leading citizens," chiefly merchants and lawyers, whose influence was decisive in all sorts of community affairs.

The fact that town life is portrayed chiefly in its political aspect simply reflects the artist's own interests. A perennial candidate for public office, Bingham knew and relished politics; and he has much to say to us on this score. He evokes in a most powerful way the *festive* character of political activity in the Missouri region. Elections were obviously the occasion for much excitement and merriment; they provided a welcome break in the ordinary routine of life. While the voting is actually in progress (c.f. *County Election*), we observe much earnest discussion; after it is finished (c.f. *The Verdict of the People*), there will likely be a general removal to the local public houses. Bingham's paintings also underscore the importance of personal contact, and argument, in these election campaigns. *Canvassing for a Vote* is an obvious case in point. And *Stump Speaking* portrays an ordinary citizen putting a question directly



The Verdict of the People. Courtesy, Boatmen's National Bank of St. Louis.



The County Election. Courtesy, City Art Museum of St. Louis.

to one of the candidates. In a town such as this, the individual could feel that his vote was genuinely important; and as a result he held the candidates personally accountable. So, too, it was natural to talk the issues out with his neighbors. (Note the little knots of men in both *County Election* and *The Verdict of the People*.) This was democracy in microcosm, and with a highly individualized flavor—a far cry from the “machine” politics of our own day, complete with televised debates, staffs of public relations experts and the like.

Certain mechanical features of western politics are clearly delineated in Bingham's work: the reading aloud of the results, from the courthouse steps; the frantic last-minute electioneering by the candidates themselves; the dragooning of an old drunkard by a party worker, that his vote may be made good in spite of his condition. Women, of course, did not have the franchise at this time, and consequently they find no place in Bingham's political paintings. They do not even listen to the “stump speaking.” Here was an area wholly reserved for the masculine part of the community.

Before turning to the river studies, some mention must be made of *The Squatters*, a painting which does not fit either of the major categories. Squatters formed a special group all along the frontier. Bingham carefully portrays their rough style of living—the crude log-hut, the cauldron over the open, outdoor fire, the woman with her washing by the cabin door. But more than that, he manages to convey something of their particular psychology. They peer out at us from the canvas with a look that is extremely defensive, if not hostile. The wonderful figure of the old man is especially unique in this respect; there is a tension in both his eyes and his stance, not to be found elsewhere among Bingham's subjects. It is almost as if he suspects the imminent approach of a government land-agent. Bingham's rivermen, and his townspeople too, are essentially at peace with their world; but not so these squatters.

If the western town had standards and a mode of living distinctively its own, it nonetheless interacted all the time with elements more readily associated with the old frontier. The squatters have just been mentioned; and in the case of a river-town there would also be boatmen and fur-traders. The relationship between these groups was a special and rather subtle sort of thing. They used each other in various ways (especially for mutual economic benefit), but socially they maintained a more or less rigorous “apartheid.” This arrangement did not necessarily imply hostility; rather, it represented a kind of genuinely “peaceful coexistence.” The whole pattern is strikingly exemplified in Bingham's paintings.



Stump Speaking. Courtesy, Boatmen's National Bank of St. Louis.



The Jolly Flatboatmen. Courtesy, City Art Museum of St. Louis.

In the first place, he never shows the different groups mixing. In only one instance are townsmen painted into a river picture; and this is the exception that truly does prove the rule. In *The Jolly Flatboatmen in Port* we find a number of boatmen grouped around a dancing figure; while behind and to the right, two men in dark suits busy themselves with some sort of computation. The latter are almost certainly town merchants. They take no interest in the activities of the boatmen; their only reason for descending to the shoreline at all is, presumably, to transact business. Conversely it is impossible to identify any boatmen in Bingham's political (i.e., town) paintings.

But Bingham's work reflects the social apartheid of the river-towns in ways more telling than this. Here, the *facial* expressions of his rivermen are especially important. Consider how frequently the eyes of these figures meet our own. We, the audience, as well as the artist and the whole "town-life" that he represents, are almost as much an object of curiosity to *them* as they are to us. Thus they return our stare. The *Boatmen of the Missouri* provides a good example of this; and even better, perhaps, is the famous *Jolly Flatboatmen*. Notice the expression of the man in the right foreground, and also the slightly smirking figure seated behind the dancer. It is as if Bingham had come up behind these people as unobtrusively as possible. He brings with him another, very different world; and both he and they know it. He cannot expect to share their life. They would not think of asking him to join in their merrymaking; in fact, they address to him no words whatsoever. On both sides there is simply a quiet, gently inquiring gaze.

One can find ample literary reference to this kind of social differentiation. An issue of the *Missouri Republican* had the following to say of Bingham's "new field of painting": "The field is as interesting as it is novel. The Western boatmen are a peculiar class in most of their habits, dress and manners. . . . [In these, as in] every other particular, they are an anomaly."⁷ A New Englander who traveled in the West during the 1830s noted that "the manners of the boatmen are as strange as their language. Their peculiar way of life has given origin not only to an appropriate dialect, but to new modes of enjoyment, riot, and fighting."⁸

Mark Twain has left us the most eloquent of all the descriptions of these men. They were, he wrote in his *Life on the Mississippi*,

rough and hardy . . . rude, uneducated, brave, suffering terrific hardships with sailor-like stoicism; heavy drinkers, coarse frolickers in moral sties like the Natchez-under-the-hill of that day, heavy fighters, reckless

⁷ See McDermott, p. 62.

⁸ See Ina Faye Woestemeyer, *The Westward Movement* (New York, 1939), p. 334.

fellows every one, elephantinely jolly, foul-witted, profane, prodigal of their money, bankrupt at the end of their trip, fond of barbaric finery, prodigious braggarts; yet in the main honest, trustworthy, faithful to promises and duty, and often picturesquely magnanimous.⁹

The symbol of this river life has become the flamboyant "half-horse, half-alligator" figure of Mike Fink, whose boast it was that "I kin outrun, outhop, outjump, throw down, knock down, drag out, and lick any man in the country. I'm a Salt-River roarer, I love the wimmen, and I'm chock-full of fight."

There is something enormously striking in the *postures* of Bingham's boatmen: they suggest a remarkable sort of muscular freedom, and a great capacity for repose. It appears that a boatman could flop down comfortably on whatever object happened to be around—a barrel, a log, a rock, or any combination thereof. Without particular effort he could adjust the shape of his own lanky frame to that of the available props.

The boatman's ability to relax doubtless owed much to the quiet of his surroundings. Bingham, indeed, conveys exactly this point, as he blends into a perfect harmony the mood of the men and of the river. Once again there is something here which runs counter to a common stereotype. We tend to think of the frontier as an extremely agitated, busy sort of environment; yet there was another side to it which could be lazy and passive beyond anything known in more settled communities. Frontier life possessed a special sort of rhythm in which prodigious bursts of activity were alternated with periods of near inertia. Indeed, certain contemporary observers recognized exactly this pattern in the routine of the boatmen. To quote from the account of one Timothy Flint (written in 1826): "Theirs is . . . a way of life, . . . in turn extremely indolent and extremely laborious; for days together requiring little or no effort, and attended with no danger, and then on a sudden, laborious and hazardous beyond Atlantic navigation."¹⁰ Perhaps it was precisely because they *did* work hard when the occasion demanded that they could also relax so completely.

Bingham, of course, chose to confine his description to the latter kind of situation. His work represents a faithful chronicle of the amusements which the boatmen contrived—cards, fishing, whisky (there is a jug tucked into the corner of nearly all of the paintings), dancing (Flint writes: "Almost every boat, while it lies in the harbor, has one or more fiddles scraping continually on board, to which you often see the boatmen dancing"),¹¹ and finally, that most common leisure-time occupation

⁹ Samuel L. Clements, *Life on the Mississippi* (Heritage ed.; New York, 1944), pp. 15-16.

¹⁰ See Woestmeyer, p. 334.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 335.

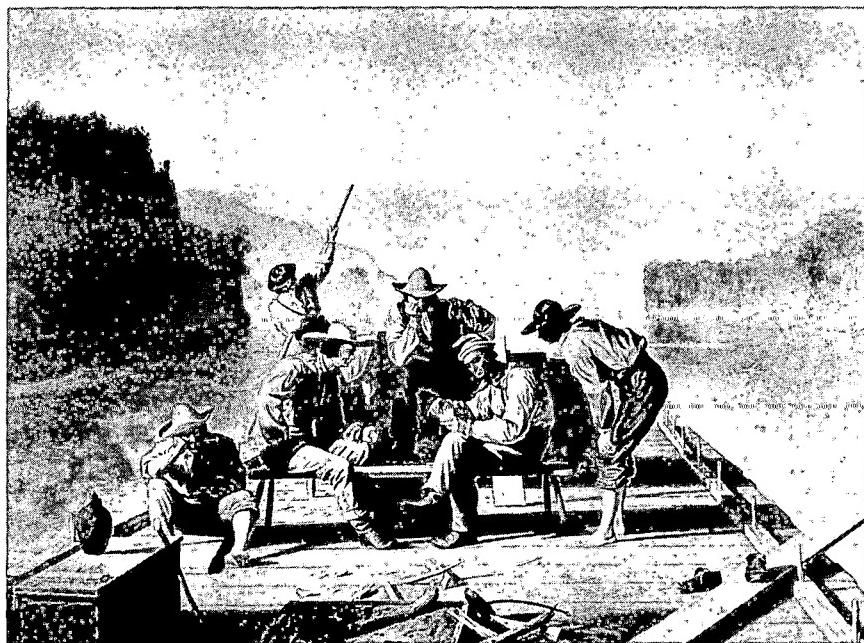
of all, simply lazing about. These men were, to all appearances, extremely prone to idle reflection and daydreaming.

In the jargon of modern sociology, they could appropriately be called "inner-directed." Or, if a simpler terminology be preferred, they possessed an easy, relaxed kind of individual integrity. This is especially apparent in the paintings of the various group entertainments. In the *Raftmen Playing Cards*, for example, there are only two men actually holding cards, two rather casual kibitzers and two others who are not involved in the game at all. In *The Jolly Flatboatmen* we see a dancer and two musicians, and five other figures whose interest in the proceedings varies from mild to none whatsoever. These are, then, very loosely knit groups. A man could join in the activities of his neighbors or not, as he chose. Certainly he felt under no compulsion to do so.

Also characteristic of the boatmen was a talent for all manner of casual improvisation. Their varied postures (already discussed) demonstrate this; likewise such bits of detail as the shirt set out to dry and held down by a rock in *The Jolly Flatboatmen*, the skillet employed as a musical instrument, and the many barrels, boxes and the like, frequently put to use as seats or headrests.

A final aspect of the rivermen worth noting is their headgear. It can be said, almost without qualification, that every man in these paintings wears a hat, and that there are no two alike. Ranging from the stocking cap on one of the card-players, to the jaunty silk-topper in *Boatmen of the Missouri*, they cover a wide range of color, shape and size. It is difficult to say what should be made of this. Perhaps it is sufficient simply to state the fact. Perhaps, on the other hand, one could venture the suggestion that hats became for these men a kind of symbol of their individuality.

One more painting of surpassing interest as social history remains to be considered: the beautifully-handled *Fur-Traders Descending the Missouri*. It is important to differentiate this work from the other river pictures; one must not confuse the fur-traders with the boatmen simply because the background is the same. For theirs was a way of life distinct unto itself. We may imagine that fur-traders passed through a town like Franklin, Missouri, only at certain times of the year. They were much less a normal part of the whole scene than the boatmen. Townspeople may not have intermingled socially with the boatmen, but, in some sense at least, they knew the latter group well. The hardy *courreurs de bois*, by contrast, were a far more mysterious, more completely alien group. A townsman would look upon them with feelings of a very special sort.



Raftsmen Playing Cards. Courtesy, City Art Museum of St. Louis.



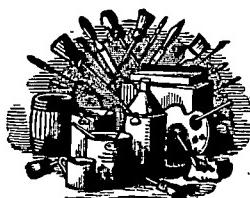
Fur Traders Descending the Missouri. Courtesy, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Morris K. Jessup Fund.

Something of this is, I think, conveyed in the Bingham painting. The old trader in the stern is an almost unearthly figure, with flashing eyes, savagely pursed lips, long, gaunt frame, and strange wool hat. The boy, too, is of much interest. It should be noted here that life on the river, whether that of the boatmen or the fur-traders, possessed "irresistible seductions" for "the young people that . . . [lived] near the banks." (Once again the words are Timothy Flint's.) "No wonder that . . . [they] should detest the labours of the field, and embrace every opportunity, either openly, or if minors, covertly, to escape and devote themselves to the pernicious employment of boating."¹² Consider Bingham's boy-fur-trader in the light of this comment—especially the wistful, faraway, somehow uncanny expression on his face. Imagine what it might suggest to a boy of comparable age growing up in the town. What rare sights those youthful eyes must have looked upon; how redolent do they seem with the wisdom of the vast, untamed hinterland to the west.

Lastly, what shall we make of the little black animal, sitting in the bow of the boat? There has been considerable disagreement heretofore, simply about its identity. To some people it is obviously a cat; to others, just as obviously a fox. And to the author of the most recent full-length study of Bingham it is "*not* a cat, *not* a fox, but plain for all with eyes to see, a bear cub brought down from the mountains."¹³ Yet the larger context of the painting as a whole, with its pervasive air of mystery, suggests another, rather different way of resolving the issue. Might not the artist have *intended* to create a little puzzle here? The only thing one can say with any assurance is that the animal was indeed "brought down from the mountains." The enigma of its identity, on the other hand, may have a certain symbolic value. Perhaps Bingham purposely contrived it thus, so as to dramatize the feelings of wonder, of puzzlement, of both envy and suspicion with which Missouri townfolk would regard these fur-traders.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 335.

¹³ McDermott, p. 51.



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Symbols of the Jazz Age: The New Negro and Harlem Discovered

AMERICAN SOCIETY HAS ANTICIPATED THE ARRIVAL OF A "NEW NEGRO" FOR at least seventy-five years. In the white South of the 1890s, for example, it was common to contrast the former slaves with the first Negro generation born in freedom—to the detriment of the latter. "The good old Negroes," said a southern farmer at the turn of the century, "are a first-rate class of labor. The younger ones [are] discontented and want to be roaming."¹ At about the same time Booker T. Washington surveyed America's racial scene and, contrary to the view of white Southerners, found it good. He related tales of Negro achievement and success since the Civil War which encouraged him to believe that the "Negro of to-day is in every phase of life far advanced over the Negro of thirty years ago." Washington hoped all Negroes would strive to achieve "the new life" and, accordingly, called his book *A New Negro for a New Century*.² The racial crises that followed the two world wars of the present century revived the concept. William Pickens, Negro educator and NAACP official, discovered a "New Negro" militancy and racial consciousness in 1916, and others have used the phrase to describe the Negro protest movements of the 1950s and 1960s.³

Amid the confusions that have hovered around the meaning of the term "New Negro" is one solid fact: the phrase entered the main stream of

¹ *Report of the Industrial Commission on Agriculture and Agricultural Labor* (Washington, D. C., 1901), X, 50, 504, 770.

² Booker T. Washington, *A New Negro for a New Century* (Chicago, 1900?), pp. 3 and *passim*.

³ William Pickens, *The New Negro* (New York, 1916); *The New Negro*, ed. Mathew H. Ahmann (Notre Dame, Ind., 1961); *The New Negro: Thirty Years Afterward*, ed. Charles S. Johnson (Washington, D. C., 1955).

American thought in the 1920s, in the Jazz Age. A "New Negro," and his supposed place of residence, Harlem, were discovered by the white world then. Despite the romance and pride traditionally associated with the "Harlem Renaissance," the portrayal of the Negro that developed in the 1920s was *primarily* a product of broader changes in American society. It would be difficult to find a better example of the confusions, distortions, half-truths and quarter-truths that are the foundations of racial and ethnic stereotypes than the white world's image of the "New Negro" and Harlem in the 1920s.

The 1920s, as is well known, was a remarkable age in American intellectual history. A cultural rebellion of the first order erupted from beneath the complacency and conservatism that were dominant characteristics of American society and politics then. It was the time when writers, artists, scholars, aesthetes and bohemians became aware of the standardization of life that resulted from mass production and large-scale, efficient industrialization—the "Machine Civilization," that "profound national impulse [that] drives the hundred millions steadily toward uniformity."⁴ These intellectuals declared war on tenets of American thought and faith that had remained sacrosanct for three hundred years. As a by-product of their attack on traditional American middle-class values, which were constantly called "Puritanical," literary rebels and others discovered the Negro, America's "outcast," and created a semimythical dreamland which they came to idealize—"storied Harlem."⁵

In some part, this growing national awareness was caused by significant changes within Negro society. There seemed to be a new militancy in the Negro world after World War I—reflected in Harlem's well-known Silent Parade to protest the East St. Louis race riots, in the racial program and consciousness of Marcus Garvey, in A. Philip Randolph's struggling movement to found the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters and Maids, in the numerous little leftist groups active in the Negro ghettos, in the national campaign to promote federal anti-lynching legislation. Yet American society never really took these movements seriously in the 1920s—Garvey was considered a comical figure; an anti-lynching law was never enacted; riots continued; Randolph's union made little headway until the Great Depression; the leftists were ignored or considered crackpots.

The 1920s also saw the rise of a noteworthy group of Negro writers and scholars, and America gave *them* considerable recognition. Some of the

⁴ Carl Van Doren, "The Negro Renaissance," *Century Magazine*, CXI (March 1926), 637.

⁵ Gilbert Seldes, "The Negro's Songs," *Dial*, LXXX (March 1926), 247-51.

novels, plays, poems, books and articles of Countee Cullen, James Weldon Johnson, George S. Schuyler, Claude McKay, Wallace Thurman, Zora Neale Hurston, Jessie Fauset, Rudolph Fisher, Jean Toomer, Charles S. Johnson, E. Franklin Frazier and others were good enough in their own right to justify public acclaim. The poetry of Langston Hughes continues to be widely read. Harlem was the center of this "New Negro Renaissance" and, like an "ebony flute," it lured Negro writers to it: "Harlem was like a great magnet for the Negro intellectual, pulling him from everywhere," wrote Langston Hughes.⁶ Claude McKay came to Harlem from Jamaica, after two years at an agricultural college in Kansas; Jean Toomer was from an Alabama plantation; Langston Hughes arrived in 1921 after a sojourn in Mexico. "I can never put on paper the thrill of the underground ride to Harlem," Hughes recalled. "I went up the steps and out into the bright September sunlight. Harlem! I stood there, dropped my bags, took a deep breath and felt happy again."⁷ Wherever they wandered in the 1920s, and many went to Paris or Africa for a time, the Negro literati always returned *Home to Harlem* (to use the title of a McKay novel). Little theater, art and political discussion groups flourished in the community. Negro literary and political magazines made their appearance: *Fire*, *The Messenger*, *Voice of the Negro*, *The Negro Champion*, *Harlem*. The 135th Street library became Harlem's cultural center. "The Schomburg Collection," remembered George S. Schuyler, "used to be a great gathering place for all the people of the Renaissance."⁸ In the 1920s one could hear lectures there by such prominent people as Franz Boas, W. E. B. DuBois, Carl Van Doren, James Weldon Johnson, Carter G. Woodson, Kelly Miller, Melville J. Herskovits, R. R. Moton and Arthur A. Schomburg. Harlem became what contemporaries called the "Mecca of the New Negro."⁹

Some observers, Negro and white, looked to this outburst of literary and artistic expression as a significant step in the direction of a more general acceptance of Negroes by American society. Alain Locke, gifted writer and Howard University professor, argued that social equality would result from the recognition of the "New Negro" as an "artist class." ". . . it seems that the interest in the cultural expression of Negro life . . . heralds an almost revolutionary revaluation of the Negro," he wrote in 1927. It

⁶ Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea* (New York, 1940), p. 240.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁸ "The Reminiscences of George S. Schuyler" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1962), p. 208.

⁹ Claude McKay, *A Long Way From Home* (New York, 1937); *passim*, and *Home to Harlem* (New York, 1927); "Harlem: Mecca of the New Negro," *Survey*, LIII (March 1, 1925), 629-724; Alain Locke, *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York, 1925).

was "an augury of a new democracy in American culture."¹⁰ Heywood Broun, well-known journalist and critic, addressed the New York Urban League at a Harlem church. He believed "a supremely great negro artist, [an artist] who could catch the imagination of the world, would do more than any other agency to remove the disabilities against which the negro race now labors. . . . This great artist may come at any time," Broun concluded, and he asked his audience to remain silent for ten seconds to imagine the coming of the savior-genius.¹¹ This same theme of a broad cultural acceptance evolving from the recognition of the "New Negro" as "a creator" dominates the writings of James Weldon Johnson in the 1920s. Johnson and others somehow believed that American racism was a process that could be reasoned with; a phenomenon that would crumble when whites recognized Negroes had extraordinary and unique artistic talents. "I am coming to believe," Johnson wrote his close friend Carl Van Vechten, "that nothing can go farther to destroy race prejudice than the recognition of the Negro as a creator and contributor to American civilization."¹² "Harlemites thought the millennium had come," remembered Langston Hughes. "They thought the race problem had at last been solved through Art. . . ."¹³

There was an element of realism in the romantic hopes of Johnson, Broun and Locke. For white Americans to grant that the Negro was capable of making *any* contribution to American culture was in itself a new idea—"that the Negro is a creator as well as creature . . . a giver as well as . . . receiver."¹⁴ A new and more liberal vision of democracy developed among social scientists in the 1920s. Scholars like Robert E. Park, Herbert A. Miller, Franz Boas, Melville J. Herskovits, Charles S. Johnson, Bruno Lasker, E. Franklin Frazier and Horace M. Kallen attacked traditional American attitudes toward assimilation and "Americanization." A more vital and beautiful democracy would arise, they argued, by permitting ethnic groups to maintain their individuality, rather than conceiving them swallowed up (or melted down) in the one dominant American culture. Each group, given freedom of expression and development, would then make valuable contributions to American society.

¹⁰ Alain Locke and Lothrop Stoddard, "Should the Negro Be Encouraged to Cultural Equality?" *Forum*, LXXVIII (October 1927), 508; Locke, "Enter the New Negro," *Survey*, LIII (March 1, 1925), 631-34; Locke, "Negro Contributions to America," *World Tomorrow*, XII (June 1929), 255-57.

¹¹ *New York Times*, January 26, 1925.

¹² James Weldon Johnson to Carl Van Vechten, envelope dated March 6, 1927. James Weldon Johnson Collection of Negro Arts and Letters, Yale University.

¹³ *The Big Sea*, p. 288.

¹⁴ Johnson to Van Vechten; envelope dated March 6, 1927. Johnson Collection.

Diversity, cultural pluralism, should be fostered and encouraged, not stifled, they wrote.¹⁵

A spate of articles and books published in the 1920s seriously analyzed and attempted to understand the Negro's place in the nation. The dozens of volumes about Negroes written by pseudo-scientists and racists at the turn of the century were now replaced by works which attempted to cut through racial stereotypes ("generalized theories about racial qualities") and tried to find some viable program for "interracial cooperation." "The American Negro can no longer be dismissed as an unimportant element in the population of the United States," concluded one man. Bruno Lasker's *And Who Is My Neighbor?* and *All Colors* were among the earliest serious studies of American interracial attitudes.¹⁶ *The Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science printed a thick volume of studies on Negroes by the nation's leading social scientists.¹⁷ *The World Tomorrow*, a fascinating Christian Pacifist journal, devoted two full issues to similar articles in the 1920s.¹⁸ Most of the major periodicals of the decade contained large numbers of serious and important studies of Negro life. The artistic and human value of Negro spirituals, folk songs, folk legends and music was first recognized in the 1920s (many considered them America's most important contribution to world culture); Darius Milhaud, after listening to Negro music in Lenox Avenue cafes, composed pieces which made use of jazz rhythms and instruments; *In Abraham's Bosom*, one of Paul Green's many plays of southern Negro life, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1926; Eugene O'Neill and Robert E. Sherwood constructed plays and novels around Negro characters and themes.¹⁹ As important as this new recognition was, however, it was a minor trend in American thought. The generation that advocated cultural pluralism was also the generation that saw the revival of the Ku Klux Klan, and permanently restricted foreign immigration to the United States.

¹⁵ See, for example, Robert W. Bagnall, "The Divine Right of Race," *World Tomorrow*, VI (May 1923), 149; Herbert A. Miller, "Democracy and Diversity," *World Tomorrow*, VII (June 1924), 190-91; Robert E. Park, *The Immigrant Press and Its Control* (New York, 1922); Horace M. Kallen, *Culture and Democracy in the United States: Studies in the Group Psychology of the American Peoples* (New York, 1924).

¹⁶ "The Reminiscences of Bruno Lasker" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1957), p. 242 and chap. ix.

¹⁷ *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CXL (November 1928).

¹⁸ *World Tomorrow*, VI (May 1923) and IX (April 1926).

¹⁹ Laurence Buermeyer, "The Negro Spirituals and American Art," *Opportunity*, IV (May 1926), 158-59, 167; Harry Alan Potamkin, "African Sculpture," *Opportunity*, VI (May 1929), 139-40, 147; James Weldon Johnson to Carl Van Vechten, envelope dated February 16, 1931; Johnson Collection; A. M. Chirgwin, "The Vogue of the Negro Spiritual," *Edinburgh Review*, CCXLVII (January 1928), 57-74; Darius Milhaud, "The Jazz Band and Negro Music," *Living Age*, CCCXXIII (October 18, 1924), 169-73.

Had intellectuals like Johnson and Locke looked more critically at the stereotype of the "New Negro" that developed in the writings of most white commentators of the 1920s, they would have had further cause to question the extent of interracial understanding that existed then. White literary rebels created a "vogue in things Negro," "an enthusiasm for negro life and art" that bordered on being a cult.²⁰ They saw Negroes not as people but as symbols of everything America was not. The concept of the existence of a "New Negro" and the publicity given to it in the 1920s was primarily the result of this new awareness and interest in Negro society by what one writer called the "New White Man."²¹ The generation that discovered "newness" all around itself—New Humanism, New Thought, New Woman, New Psychology, New Masses, New Poetry, New Criticism, and so on—also found a "New Negro"; and the concept became a cultural weapon: "Another Bombshell Fired into the Heart of Bourgeois Culture." "Negro stock is going up," wrote novelist Rudolph Fisher, "and everybody's buying."²²

In the literature of the 1920s Negroes were conceived as "expressive" ("a singing race") in a society burdened with "unnatural inhibitions"; their lives were "primitive" and "exotic" (these two words appear repeatedly) in a "dull," "weary" and "monotonous" age; they could laugh and love freely in a "land flowing with Socony and Bryan and pristine Rotary purity." Negroes were presented as people who lived an "entire lifetime of laughs and thrills, [of] excitement and fun"—they had an "innate gayety of soul." "Ecstasy," wrote Joseph Wood Krutch in *The Nation*, "seems . . . to be his natural state."²³ The stereotype of the Negro that had existed in American society in the nineteenth century was largely untouched by the new interest in Negro life. It was continued, for example, in such "all-talking melodramas" as "Lucky Sambo," "Hearts in Dixie" and "Halle-

²⁰ Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," *Nation*, CXXII (June 23, 1926), 693; Charles S. Johnson, "The Balance Sheet: Debits and Credits in Negro-White Relations," *World Tomorrow*, XI (January 1928), 13-16; Ernest Boyd, "Readers and Writers," *Independent*, CXVI (January 16, 1926), 77; George Jean Nathan, "The Wail of the Negro," *American Mercury*, XVIII (September 1929), 114-16; Claude McKay to James Weldon Johnson, April 30, 1928, Johnson Collection.

²¹ "The New White Man," *World Tomorrow*, X (March 1927), 124-25.

²² Rudolph Fisher, "The Caucasian Storms Harlem," *American Mercury*, XI (May 1927), 396.

²³ Eugene Gordon, "The Negro's Inhibitions," *American Mercury*, XIII (February 1928), 159-65; Clement Wood, "Hosea Before the Rotary Club," *World Tomorrow*, VIII (July 1925), 209-10; Herman Keyserling, "What the Negro Means to America," *Atlantic Monthly*, CXLIV (October 1929), 444-47; Joseph Wood Krutch, "Black Ecstasy," *Nation*, CXXV (October 26, 1927), 456-58; George S. Schuyler, "Blessed Are the Sons of Ham," *Nation*, CXXIV (March 23, 1927), 313-15; "Black Voices," *Nation*, CXIX (September 17, 1924), 278.

lujah," and in the new radio hit "Amos and Andy." In the 1920s, however, the ludicrous image of Negro as "darkey" became a subordinate theme, eclipsed by the conception of the Negro as sensuous and rhythmic African. Negroes were still thought to be alienated from traditional American virtues and values, as they had been since colonial times, but this was now considered a great asset. "To Americans," wrote a perceptive contemporary in 1929, "the Negro is not a human being but a concept."²⁴

This was the background against which white America and the world came to know the "New Negro" and Harlem: "with our eyes focused on the Harlem scene we may dramatically glimpse the New Negro."²⁵ A large Negro community had gathered in Harlem prior to World War I but, aside from small numbers of dedicated social workers, American society seemed willing to overlook its existence. In the 1920s, however, Harlem was made a national symbol—a symbol of the Jazz Age. It was seen as the antithesis of Main Street, Zenith and Gopher Prairie. Whatever seemed thrilling, bizarre or sensuous about Harlem life was made a part of the community's image; whatever was tragic about it, ignored.

Harlem of the Twenties was presented as a "great playground," America's answer to Paris.²⁶ The institution that best describes this aspect of Harlem's image was the white slumming party: "it became quite a rage . . . to go to night clubs in Harlem," recalled Carl Van Vechten.²⁷ Cabarets were filled nightly with handsomely dressed white slummers who danced the Charleston, Turkey or Black Bottom, listened to jazz or watched risqué revues. Some night spots, like the Cotton Club (which had "the hottest show in town"), and Connie's Inn (which competed for the honor), catered exclusively to whites. They were, wrote a journalist, dives "where white people from downtown could be entertained by colored girls."²⁸ If one was looking "to go on a moral vacation," or wished to soften "the asperities of a Puritan conscience," Harlem's cabarets promised to do the job. The following is an advertisement, written especially for "white consumption," and distributed by a man who sup-

²⁴ George Chester Morse, "The Fictitious Negro," *Outlook and Independent*, CLII (August 21, 1929), 648.

²⁵ *A Long Way From Home*, p. 322.

²⁶ Beverly Smith, "Harlem—Negro City," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 10, 1930.

²⁷ "The Reminiscences of Carl Van Vechten" (Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, 1960), p. 196.

²⁸ *Crisis*, XXXIX (September 1932), 293; *New York Age*, August 6, 1927. For a survey of Harlem cabarets see Archie Seale, "The Rise of Harlem As An Amusement Center," *Age*, November 2, 1935; and obituary of Moe Gale, owner of the Savoy Ballroom, *New York Times*, September 3, 1964.

plied "Slumming Hostesses" to "inquisitive Nordics" (each card was said to have a suggestive picture on it):²⁹

Here in the world's greatest city it would both amuse and also interest you to see the real inside of the New Negro Race of Harlem. You have heard it discussed, but there are very few who really know. . . . I am in a position to carry you through Harlem as you would go slumming through Chinatown. My guides are honest and have been instructed to give the best service. . . . Your season is not completed with thrills until you have visited Harlem.

"White people," editorialized a Negro journal, "are taking a morbid interest in the night life of [Harlem]."³⁰

And the interest continued to grow throughout the decade. Carl Van Vechten's novel of Harlem life, *Nigger Heaven* (1925), sold 100,000 copies "almost immediately," and brought its author a substantial fortune. It was translated into French, Swedish, Russian and Japanese.³¹ Van Vechten's book contained some interesting commentaries on the structure and problems of Negro society (the role of the middle class; "passing"; prejudice; color consciousness) but its plot was contrived, sensational and melodramatic; replete with orgies, drugs and seduction; a hodgepodge of *True Confessions* and the front pages of a tabloid. Its characters were unbelievable as people. "The squalor of Negro life, the vice of Negro life," wrote Van Vechten, "offer a wealth of novel, exotic, picturesque materials to the artist."³² *Nigger Heaven* was "recognized in every quarter . . . as the portrayal of contemporary life in Harlem," said its publisher (and it undoubtedly was).³³ The white world looked curiously at the success of Marcus Garvey (whose movement basically reflected a profound Negro desire for racial pride and respect in a society that denied it), and concluded that Negroes "have parades almost every day."³⁴ White intellectuals and bohemians knew Harlem only through the cabarets, or the famous parties in the salon of the "joy-goddess of Harlem"—A'Lelia Walker's "Dark Tower": "dedicated to the aesthetes, young

²⁹ "The Slumming Hostess," *New York Age*, November 6, 1926.

³⁰ "Giving Harlem A Bad Name," "Is Harlem to be a Chinatown?" "In the Negro Cabarets," "Nordic Invasion of Harlem," *New York Age*, September 5, 1922; October 27, 1923; July 23, August 6, 1927; Committee of Fourteen, *Annual Report for 1928* (New York, 1929), pp. 31-34.

³¹ "The Reminiscences of Carl Van Vechten," p. 205.

³² Carl Van Vechten, *Nigger Heaven* (New York, 1925), *passim*.

³³ "The Negro in Art—A Symposium," *Crisis*, XXXI (March 1926), 219-20; *Crisis*, XXXIV (September 1927), 248.

³⁴ Chester T. Crowell, "The World's Largest Negro City," *Saturday Evening Post*, CXXVIII (August 8, 1925), 9. "The Caucasian Storms Harlem," *American Mercury*, XI (May 1927), 398.

writers, sculptors, painters—a rendezvous where they may feel at home.”³⁵ Bessie Smith, the great blues singer, toured America with her “Harlem Frolic” company. Josephine Baker (“Josephine of the Jazz Age”) wowed them in Harlem as a young chorus girl, and went on to international acclaim in Europe. “From a world of stone with metal decoys/Drab stone streets and drab stone masses/New York’s mold for the great middle-classes, Africa passes/With syncopated talking the Congo arouses.”³⁶

White audiences, like gluttons at a feast, vicariously tasted the “high yallers,” “tantalizin tans” and “hot chocolates” that strutted around in the Blackbird Revues, or in such plays as *Lulu Belle* (1926) and *Harlem* (1928)—and made them top box-office successes. (*Black Boy* and *Deep River*, dramas which emphasized a more serious side of Negro life, were failures.)³⁷ “Ten years ago,” wrote one Negro reviewer of *Lulu Belle*, “this play would have been unprofitable. Twenty years ago it would have caused a riot.”³⁸ The following is a handbill distributed to advertise the play *Harlem* (“A Thrilling Play of the Black Belt”):³⁹

Harlem! . . . The City that Never Sleeps! . . . A Strange, Exotic
Island in the Heart of New York! . . . Rent Parties! . . . Number
Runners! . . . Chippies! . . . Jazz Lovel . . . Primitive Passion!

“How soon this common theme shall reach the nauseating state,” remarked a caustic critic, “is not easy to tell.”⁴⁰

The Great Depression brought an abrupt end to the dream of a “New Negro” and the image of Harlem as erotic utopia. A nation sobered by bread lines no longer searched for a paradise inhabited by people who danced and loved and laughed for an “entire lifetime.” Connie’s Inn and other places of white entertainment closed down. Leading figures of the Renaissance: Wallace Thurman, Richard B. Harrison, A’Lelia Walker,

³⁵ “I am to be hostess at the Dark Tower Sunday Night April 21st, and I thought probably you and your friends would like to be present. . . .” A’Lelia Walker to Max Ewing, April 18, 1929. Ewing Collection, Yale University. A’Lelia Walker was the daughter and heir of the wealthy Madame C. J. Walker. Eric D. Walrond, “The Black City,” *Messenger*, VI (January 1924), 14. *New York Age*, October 29, 1927.

³⁶ Paul Oliver, *Bessie Smith* (New York, 1959), p. 45. Ermine Kahn, “Lenox Avenue—Saturday Night,” *World Tomorrow*, VIII (November 1925), 337.

³⁷ *New York Age*, November 27, 1926.

³⁸ Hubert H. Harrison, “The Significance of Lulu Belle,” *Opportunity*, IV (July 1926), 228-29; *Crisis*, XXXII (May 1926), 34; “Black Harlem Dramatized,” *Literary Digest*, C (March 16, 1929), 21-24; James Weldon Johnson to Carl Van Vechten, envelope dated April 4, 1930, Johnson Collection.

³⁹ Quoted in Diana N. Lockard, “The Negro on the Stage in the Nineteen Twenties” (Master’s thesis, Columbia University, 1960), p. 38.

⁴⁰ *Outlook and Independent*, CLII (August 21, 1929), 649; Charles S. Johnson, “Public Opinion and the Negro,” *Proceedings of National Conference in Social Work*, 1923 (Chicago, 1924), 497-502.

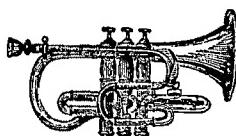
Charles S. Gilpin, Florence Mills, Arthur A. Schomburg, died in the late 1920s or 1930s. Most of the Negro literati, though not all, stopped writing or, if they continued to do so, found a less responsive American audience for their works.⁴¹ All the Negro literary magazines folded.

And, as the exotic vision of the 1920s passed, a new image of the Negro and Harlem emerged—a Harlem already known to stolid census-takers, city health officers and social workers. “The rosy enthusiasms and hopes of 1925,” wrote Alain Locke ten years later, “were . . . cruelly deceptive mirage[s].” The ghetto was revealed in the 1930s as “a nasty, sordid corner into which black folk are herded”—“*a Harlem that the social worker knew all along but had not been able to dramatize. . . . There is no cure or saving magic in poetry and art for . . . precarious marginal employment, high mortality rates, civic neglect,*” concluded Locke.⁴² It was this Harlem, the neighborhood not visible “from the raucous interior of a smoke-filled, jazz-drunk cabaret,” the Harlem hidden by the “bright surface . . . of . . . night clubs, cabaret tours and . . . arty magazines,” that was devastated by the depression; and has remained a community with an inordinate share of sorrow and deprivation ever since. “The depression brought everybody down a peg or two,” wrote Langston Hughes. “And the Negroes had but few pegs to fall.” The myth-world of the 1920s had ended.⁴³

⁴¹ The most glaring exception to this generalization is Langston Hughes.

⁴² “Harlem had been too long the nighttime playground of New York. . . .” Alain Locke, “La Guardia and Harlem,” manuscript in La Guardia Papers. Locke, “Harlem: Dark Weather-Vane,” *Survey Graphic*, XXV (August 1936), 457-62, 493-95. Quotations in the above text are from the manuscript of this article in the La Guardia Papers. Italics mine.

⁴³ Wallace Thurman, “Harlem Facets,” *World Tomorrow*, X (November 1927), 466. E. Franklin Frazier, “Negro Harlem: An Ecological Study,” *American Journal of Sociology*, XLIII (July 1937), 86. *The Big Sea*, p. 247; George W. Harris, “Harlem Gets a New Jail,” *Nation*, CXXXIII (September 9, 1931), 258; “Negro Children in New York,” *Nation*, CXXXIV (May 25, 1932), 588.



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Andrew Dickson White as Ex-President: The Plight of a Retired Reformer

EARLY IN DECEMBER OF 1885, ANDREW DICKSON WHITE SAT DOWN TO A MOST painful task. Recently retired from the first presidency of Cornell University, he had received a copy of the inaugural address of his successor, Charles Kendall Adams. "This day," White noted in his diary, "came upon me one of the great disappointments of my life and in some respects the most cruel."¹

Adams had been one of White's prize students in history at the University of Michigan in the 1850s. He had succeeded White as professor of history at that institution, and had been elected to the presidency of Cornell by a Board of Trustees overwhelmed by White's arguments in his behalf. The retiring president had gone so far as to suggest that he knew of no man better qualified "to decide between the claims of rival systems of instruction."² The development of American higher education described by Adams in his address both surprised and disappointed White, for it failed to coincide with his own conception of that growth. Particularly had Adams, "who owed his start in life to me—whom I made Pres'd't of Cornell University against fearful odds,"³ neglected the role of Cornell and overpraised the role of Harvard. Concluding that Adams must restudy the period in question and should neither "praise unjustly the worst enemy of all my efforts" (referring to Charles Eliot,

¹ *The Diaries of Andrew Dickson White*, ed. Robert M. Ogden (Ithaca, 1959). Entry for December 1, 1885.

² Andrew Dickson White, *The Presidency of Cornell University: Remarks to the trustees on their request: July 13, 1885* (Ithaca, 1885).

³ Ogden, *White's Diaries*, December 1, 1885.

president of Harvard) nor "curry favor" with men who are still active in educational circles at the expense of his old friends, White wrote him at great length offering his views on the significant changes in higher education from roughly 1850 through 1880.⁴

Despite White's venom, his letter is useful. White, Adams and Eliot all had different views about the salient features of the early portion of what Metzger has called "the age of the University."⁵ How did White, regarded as a qualified historian and intimately connected for thirty years with the rise of universities, see this development? To what extent did he regard his efforts as common endeavor with other educational reformers, and to what extent did he see himself working alone? How did his personal involvement and relations with other educational leaders color his perception of both his work and theirs?

Adams had described in his address the concern at the heart of many of the university reforms of the past thirty years. The problem, he had asserted, was how American higher education could be brought into accord with "the feelings, the aspirations, the needs, and the demands of the present civilization."⁶ According to Adams there were two significant responses to this question. The first was best represented by the work of Henry Tappan, who developed a "parallel scientific course" while president of the University of Michigan during the 1850s. In so doing Tappan had sought to perfect what had been conceived of for the University of Virginia and tried at Union College. He had failed, however, to create a scientific course either thorough or with status equal to that of the traditional classical curriculum. Whatever were Tappan's mistakes, Cornell University had avoided them and therefore successfully applied the principle of parallel courses.

The second response was modification of the classical course by allowing each student to pursue his interests through the inclusion of electives. This solution was begun at Harvard under the mild leadership of President Hill and continued under the more forceful guidance of Charles William Eliot. Presumably the "interests" which underlay the students' new-found freedom of election were in science. The elective system and "practical education" were newlyweds destined for a long but seldom tranquil campus honeymoon.

⁴ Andrew D. White to Charles K. Adams, December 23, 1885. A. D. White Papers, Cornell University Archives.

⁵ Walter P. Metzger, *Academic Freedom in the Age of the University* (New York, 1955).

⁶ Charles K. Adams, "Inaugural Address" in *Proceedings and Addresses at the Inauguration of Charles Kendall Adams, LL.D., to the Presidency of Cornell University* (Ithaca, 1886).

Adams made his most glaring mistake in the eyes of Andrew White by crediting Eliot with educational statesmanship. For many years, White had been sensitive about the credit given Eliot for the development of the elective system as a device for handling "the scientific question." He was always quick to point out that his own *Plan of Organization* for Cornell University, written in 1866,⁷ carried a more balanced and complete discussion of this question than did Eliot's famous articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1869.⁸ White opened his letter by stating that he had carefully reread these articles. Since much of his analysis stemmed from his reaction to them, they require our attention for a moment.

Writing while still professor of chemistry at the newly founded Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Eliot had asserted at the outset that the need for a more practical education was agreed upon by virtually every thinking man outside of the traditional colleges. Having taken for granted the need for "the new education," Eliot had proceeded directly to the problem of organizing it. How could scientific institutions be organized to compete with the traditional colleges with their two centuries of lore, their high endowments and their countless loyal alumni in powerful positions? With this as the basic question Eliot had then examined recent attempts to construct curricula based on "the pure and applied sciences, the living European languages, and mathematics." Looking to all higher schools exclusive of the "agricultural colleges begotten by congress," he identified three types of organization: (1) the scientific school in conjunction with a traditional college such as had been founded at Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth and Columbia; (2) the parallel course as developed at Union, Brown and Michigan; and, (3) the single-purpose institution such as Rensselaer or M.I.T. Eliot argued that the cooperation between the faculties claimed for the first plan "is more apparent than real," and that the parallel course plan amounted merely to the suppression of Greek and Latin and the addition of a bit of English and chemistry. He had maintained, in addition, that these plans were based on the false assumption that scientific and classical studies are compatible in the same mind and therefore at the same institution. Rejecting the metaphor of the well-rounded individual, Eliot had insisted that the mind is more like an auger than a ball. Scientific studies would sharpen the mind as well as fill it with useful information. The "new education," therefore, should be organized around such specialized institutions as M.I.T. Fur-

⁷ Andrew Dickson White, *Report of the Committee on Organization, Presented to the Trustees of Cornell University* (Albany, 1867).

⁸ Charles William Eliot, "The New Education—Its Organization," *Atlantic Monthly*, XXIII (1869), 203-20; XXIII (1869), 358-67.

ther, every institution should offer the speciality which its students demand.

Andrew White's central concern during his tenure at Cornell as he saw it was the same as Eliot's in his articles—developing a university based on the needs of the nineteenth century. White, however, declared that Eliot's articles were banal, although he did not imply that his institutional affiliation at the time colored his thinking. To understand the appropriate response to the nineteenth-century need for scientific education, White implored Adams to examine the salient features of Cornell itself and the reasons set forth for them in its original *Plan of Organization*.

Cornell's major achievement in White's view was the establishment of complete equality of classical, scientific and technical studies. Based on the "germ contained in the act of 1862," Cornell developed a curriculum in which, within limits, any student could pursue any interest. White called the view that classical and scientific studies are incompatible a "mistaken platitude" and continued, "if the last twenty years at the University of Michigan and at Cornell University prove anything, they prove that there is a distinct *advantage* in having classical students and scientific students, and indeed technical students, within the same walls, so far as possible." As a "straw in the wind" indicating the equality of studies at Cornell, White noted that fraternities, traditionally only for the classical students, had at Cornell from their beginning accepted students from all courses.⁹

Having rejected Eliot's basic premise that special institutions were essential to a scientific education, White went on to indict Eliot's conception of the needs of the nineteenth century. He did this by pointing out how much broader was his own view of those demands. Most striking of the requirements, White maintained, was for a university which would appeal to all classes of people.¹⁰ White's original plan had called for nine courses (what now might be called "majors") in the division of "Special Sciences and Arts" and five in the division of "Science, Literature, and the Arts in General." Confident that Henry Tappan's failure at Michigan

⁹ Cornell's first professor of agriculture did not have such pleasant memories. While he credited White with much sympathy for his work, both the Trustees and the "classical professors" made him feel in an "alien atmosphere." Further, the agriculture students were seldom welcome in the "literary societies and fraternities." Isaac Roberts, *Autobiography of a Farm Boy* (Albany, N. Y., 1916).

¹⁰ Perhaps White had been inspired by Johnathan B. Turner, a midwestern advocate of industrial education during the 1850s. Turner had argued colorfully for universities to make the "industrial class thinking laborers and the professional class laborious thinkers." See Mary Turner Carriel, *The Life of Johnathan Baldwin Turner* (Privately printed, 1911).

stemmed to a great extent from his refusal to admit practical and technical courses to the curriculum, White also foresaw a "Division of Special Courses" ranging from agriculture through mining and law to education. Convinced that culture and utility could walk the campus hand in hand, he sought as well "General Courses" which emphasized to various degrees modern or ancient history, living or dead languages. White's version of the elective system was closely linked with these offerings. He rejected the rigidity of the traditional college on the one hand and the promiscuous "choice at immaturity" allowed at Harvard on the other. He confirmed his own early view that most students on entering the university know their interests, but not how best to pursue them. Permit them, then, to select the course in which they shall register, but lay down fairly specific guidelines about what each course shall include. For mature students, White included an "Optional Course" which allowed for complete freedom of selection.

While the nature of the curriculum and the access students should have to it were to White his two most important innovations, he mentioned three other examples of Cornell's originality. First was the absence of sectarian considerations from all aspects of the university. No tacit agreements existed at Cornell, as they had at Michigan, that certain professorships "belonged" to certain religious organizations. Nor had the trustees, men themselves picked solely for their ability, allowed religious strings to be attached to standards of admission or gifts to the school. Second, Cornell further developed the system begun at Michigan of linking the university closely with the public school system of the state. Partially by providing intellectual leadership for this system and partially by including in its charter scholarships for each of the legislative districts in the state, Cornell had proven how well it met the demands of people in all walks of life. Finally, White pointed with pride to Cornell's leadership in co-education, mentioning that it was the first university in America to open committed to the education of women and momentarily forgetting that it was Ezra Cornell rather than Andrew White who insured that commitment. A nonsectarian university as the capstone of a state school system and educating without regard for sex completed White's description of an institution truly grounded in the needs of his age.

Not content simply to contrast his own educational statesmanship with Eliot's, and anxious to continue teaching an old student, White described four other university reforms in which Cornell led the way. Three of these specifically concerned the faculty, and deserve careful attention.

It had been claimed one of the virtues of the old-time college lay in its close personal relations between teachers and taught. After the Civil War many educational reformers asserted that the traditionally discipli-

nary nature of these relations obscured any potential for good they might have. White, however, had chosen in 1866 to blame currently poor student/teacher relations on a different cause, the increasing size of institutions. He suggested that "the duty of acquaintance and social intercourse with students be impressed on the faculty," a duty which was "the redeeming feature of English universities even during their worst periods." He therefore proposed in his *Plan* that faculty salaries be sufficient to support such socializing. To Adams he pointed with pride to the extent to which these relations had been maintained at Cornell, an institution of some magnitude by the standards of the day. Further, White felt that consistently harmonious relations among the faculty contributed to its good relations with students. To create these relations he had insisted from the day the university opened its doors that the faculty be legislators rather than mere advisers, and he therefore referred Adams to that portion of his *Plan* which called for an academic senate for "conducting general administration and memorializing the trustees." Cornell had, in his view, achieved a "university government rather than a school government," the main outcome of which was complete harmony in all its branches. So ardently did White seek to avoid "feuds" that he supported, on the grounds that no man can be put before the institution as a whole, the Trustees' summary dismissal during his absence of one of his closest faculty friends. He posited that it is "better to have science taught less brilliantly, than to have it rendered contemptible."

Turning to another aspect of Cornell life called for in his *Plan*, White chastized Adams for neglecting the use of nonresident professors to provide intellectual stimulus for faculty, students and the public. White was able to keep his campus cosmopolitan through the 1870s by importing for short periods such men as Louis Agassiz, James Russell Lowell and Goldwin Smith. This plan, copied by a number of other institutions, most notably Johns Hopkins, lent to Cornell the prestige of distinguished men who probably would not have joined the permanent faculty at any price. It also allowed him to build a resident faculty comprised of young men available at the salaries the growing institution could pay.

A final feature of Cornell which White insisted was first and fully achieved there was the requirement that all degrees be earned. He recognized that Yale was the first college in America to grant a Ph.D., but he argued that this degree at the time was a combination of both favor and work. While White himself had taken his M.A. at Yale "in course"¹¹ on his return from Europe in 1856, he later insured that Cornell would be

¹¹ Most colleges at the time would grant an M.A. to any graduate who had stayed out of trouble for three years and could pay the fee.

the first to "cut itself off resolutely from the old system" and require work for all degrees as an incentive to postgraduate study.¹²

White went on to point out two important innovations in which some other university led the way. The first was the development of the seminary method of teaching, a change for which, he asserted, Adams himself was responsible. White called this change, "of vastly greater importance than the doctrine of choosing studies at maturity," a doctrine which is "a figment of the brain, since it has never been achieved." The second, and perhaps more interesting in the long run, was the emphasis on research, which White credited to Daniel Gilman and The Johns Hopkins University. Yet White himself had forcefully appealed for emphasis on research as well as teaching in his *Plan of Organization* twenty years before. While his conception of a university was, like Gilman's in 1876, to train first MEN, then scholars, the discovery of truth and the diffusion of truth were to be the "two great ends" of the institution. Neither Gilman nor White could escape using such terms as "general good culture" or "manliness" with reference to both teachers and taught, yet each stressed at the outset of his presidency the importance of research. Both valued research as much for its alleged effect on the character of students as for its potential of discovering truth.¹³ Reference in White's letter to this striking aspect of his *Plan* was conspicuously absent.

Two other features mentioned in White's *Plan* but ignored in his letter should be noted. One of the strongest recommendations made to the original Cornell trustees was against the dormitory system. Inheriting a prejudice from Tappan as well as from his own student days, White would suffer dormitories to exist only until the citizens of Ithaca provided sufficient housing for the students. He was convinced that "no private citizen, who lets rooms in his own house to four or six students would tolerate for an hour the anarchy which most tutors in charge of college dormitories are compelled to overlook." He suggested the trustees go no further than constructing small buildings which could be leased to groups

¹² Ironically, and much to his surprise, it was White himself who, with David Starr Jordan, was granted in 1886 one of the first and only honorary degrees given by Cornell University. This change in policy was at the behest of Adams, who felt the institution was strong enough to risk whatever degradation of the earned degree the action might entail.

¹³ Gilman persisted in this theme virtually throughout his tenure as president of Johns Hopkins. In 1885, for instance, he advised a fellow university president to leave a chair in history vacant rather than accept a man who "doesn't believe at least in the beneficent and optimistic influence of Christianity." (Gilman to James B. Angell, October 26, 1885. In Angell papers, University of Michigan Archives.) In 1890 Gilman wrote that a university "must consider certain moral and social considerations," even when hiring a professor of chemistry. (Gilman to Herbert B. Adams, June 5, 1890. Gilman papers, Lanier Room, Johns Hopkins University Library.)

of students. This scheme, proposed also by Gilman while he was president of the University of California, would have left the university in only a landlord/tenant relation with its students.

The close relation between interest and learning was also cited in White's original plan but neglected in his letter. Inveighing against courses which are "droned over," he insisted in the *Plan* that "discipline comes by studies which are loved, not by studies which are loathed." Although unable to escape from the language of the mental disciplinarians so long in control of the curriculum, White struck a theme to be developed more fully by American educators two generations later.

Andrew White closed his letter with one final admonishment. He asked that Adams study the opposition to the "university principles that have triumphed," mentioning in particular that of Eliot to the multi-purpose institution and of Noah Porter, president of Yale, to the elective system.

White must be censured for the extent to which he allowed his personal relations to affect his view of history. Never one to be unfamiliar with the details of educational change anywhere in the country, he nevertheless ignored fifteen years of Charles Eliot's work at Harvard in favor of attacking two articles written, one feels sure, partially out of institutional pride. It is true, on the other hand, that each man was the same age on rising to the presidency of his institution, and that White's conceptions at the time were the more complete and articulate of the two. He had, after all, been building universities in the air since his undergraduate days at Geneva and Yale. He had traveled in Europe much more extensively than Eliot and with better guidance, and he had taught during the 1850s at Michigan, probably the leading university in the country at the time.¹⁴ Yet, how could he neglect Eliot's own inaugural address, a statement so full of bold promise?

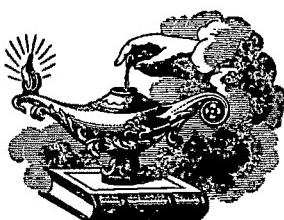
Daniel Coit Gilman and White had remained close friends since their student days together at Yale and in Europe. White had recommended Gilman for the presidency of the University of California in 1872 and of Johns Hopkins in 1875, and on several occasions had urged him to take over the leadership of Cornell. He could not refrain from speculating to Adams on the state of Harvard had Gilman instead of Eliot been offered its top position. Gilman would not only have done all that Eliot did, but "would have had the Lawrence Scientific School, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the State Agricultural College and much else

¹⁴ As early as 1862 White had proposed in some detail a university "worthy of our land and time," and had pledged half his fortune and all of his energies to its creation. (White to Gerrit Smith, September 1, 1862. In Carl Becker, *Cornell University: Founders and the Founding* [Ithaca, 1943], pp. 154-58.)

all working harmoniously as parts of the University." While Eliot was certainly fit to be "President of a great railway or manufacturing company," real educational statesmanship could be found in Baltimore and, one suspects, in Ithaca.

White's response to Adams' inaugural address was neither hasty nor calculated. It was pedantic. It assumed not only that Adams had much to learn, but would in fact learn from his old teacher. Ironically, two days after White set down his pen Adams picked up his to describe to a mutual friend his view of the *Plan of Organization* of 1866. "Of course, it is interesting: but I fear it will hardly take rank as a great state paper on educational affairs, as it abounds in crudities that could not help making a somewhat unfavorable impression on the older heads of the day."¹⁵

¹⁵ Charles K. Adams to Moses C. Tyler, December 25, 1885. (In Tyler scrapbooks, Rare Book Room, Cornell University Library.)



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Ezra Stiles versus the New Divinity Men

WHEN NEW ENGLANDERS WERE NOT ENGAGED IN CONTROVERSY WITH GOD, they were often involved in controversy with each other. And the soft Erasmian voices of men like Ezra Stiles were drowned in the din. Even the simple mythology that Yale freshmen used to absorb in the 1940s presented Stiles as a pallid figure, a learned but not very Yale man who transpired between the giants, Thomas Clap and Timothy Dwight. But now Stiles has come into his own and rather more than his own in the pages of Edmund Morgan's biography, *The Gentle Puritan*.¹ This book, based on the voluminous Stiles Papers, quite understandably sees eighteenth-century New England through the eyes of Ezra Stiles—a perspective that would reduce considerably the significance of Samuel Hopkins and other New Divinity clerics. This represents a revision of the more conventional view of the period as delineated by Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe.² Indeed as one finds Morgan, in his animadversions on the New Divinity men, attempting to push them from the center of New England life out to the periphery and to dismiss them as alienated intellectuals, one can only feel that the end of the discussion precipitated by the Great Awakening is not yet—"still Old Lights, still New Lights."

In general, Stiles' position was that of an eighteenth-century intellectual who opposed enthusiasm. He saw the Great Awakening (of which his father was the first effective opponent in Connecticut) as a noisy

¹ Edmund S. Morgan, *The Gentle Puritan, A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795* (New Haven, 1962).

² This older, conventional view interpreted the New Divinity men as the main channel of the New England Puritan tradition. That is, their theology of revivalism with its emphasis on personal conversion, though it sacrificed something of the growing richness of New England culture, was seen as perpetuating "the root of the matter" of Puritanism. For excellent statements of this view see Edwin Gaustad's *The Great Awakening in New England* (New York, 1957), pp. 126-40, and Charles H. Foster, *The Rungless Ladder: Harriet Beecher Stowe and New England Puritanism* (Durham, N. C., 1954). A brilliant statement of the way in which the Augustinian-Calvinist religion is set over against culture as it tries to transform that culture is contained in H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York, 1951, paperback ed. 1956), pp. 190-229.

delusion, a time when "multitudes were seriously, soberly, and solemnly out of their wits." Stiles found little fault with the churches of 1740; it was merely the popular fashion "to traduce the clergy as Arminian and heretical."³ Years later, as he reviewed his list of the three hundred and sixty-five pastors in New England at the time of the Awakening, he found only six or seven whom he would call Arminian.⁴ The cause of the upheaval, Stiles believed, was mainly the clever oratory of the revivalists; and he insisted that in the aftermath the unfortunate schism in New England (a reasonable versus an emotional faith) was perpetuated by the New Divinity clergy. He envisioned these men, followers of Jonathan Edwards, as aiming to institutionalize the spirit of the New Lights of the Awakening and as creating, to this end, a logical but grotesque theological system that they tried to impose on unwilling congregations; Samuel Hopkins, for example, who was dean of the group, clearly "preached away" his congregation at Great Barrington. However many of the more able young clerics inclined to the Hopkinsian views, Stiles would acknowledge the existence of no genuine New Divinity congregations.⁵

In Stiles' views of the Arminians as a "scare" and of the New Divinity as alien, we can detect something of the happy confidence of the insider who views the establishment and finds it good. Added to this is a certain mental limitation; Stiles was a man who carried a notebook and liked to record data: the measurements of streets, the annual rings of ancient tree stumps, the population of towns. At times he seems to have had the statistician's knack for viewing the outsides of things and missing their inner meanings. Confronted with the evidence of widespread growth of self-reliance and secular interests presented in the work of Perry Miller and Clifford Shipton, one wonders about the accuracy of Stiles' allowance of only six or seven Arminians among the clergy of 1740.⁶ It is clear that Stiles' view of the New Divinity as unacceptable

³ *The Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles D.D. LL.D.*, ed. Franklin B. Dexter (3 vols.; New York, 1901), III, 361.

⁴ *Ibid.*, III, 380.

⁵ Stiles' statement that there were no New Divinity Churches was made in a letter to William Williams in August, 1793 (*Literary Diary*, III, 505-6n). If one defines a New Divinity Church as one in which a majority of the members favor New Divinity principles and preaching, Stiles' statement is simply not true. Cf. *Memoir of the Reverend Alvan Hyde* (Boston, 1835); Alvan Hyde, *Sketches of the Life . . . of the Reverend Stephen West*; Jacob Catlin, *Sermons on Important Subjects* (Hartford, 1797); *Church Records* of the towns of Lee, Stockbridge and New Marlborough, Mass.

⁶ Perry Miller, *Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1949); *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, 1956). Clifford K. Shipton, "New England in Transition: Alumni Harvardienses 1690-1700" (Doctor's dissertation, Harvard, 1933); "Literary Leaven in Provincial New England," *New England Quarterly*, IX (June 1936), 203-17.

to most of the people in the congregations sometimes rested on tenuous evidence; for example, he accepted from Samuel Hopkins' theological enemy Charles Chauncy the view that Hopkins' doctrine alienated his Great Barrington congregation. Further investigation would have revealed that the question of doctrine was less important than his ineffective preaching style, his emergence in the 1760s as the leading Whig in town, his refusal to engage in part-time farming, and his loss of status through the Yankee-Yorker feud (the Israel Dewey faction having included several Dutch members). All of these facts contributed to Hopkins' exit from Great Barrington.⁷ It is apparent that Stiles harbored a lifelong antipathy for the New Divinity men and could never understand that congregations might have a profound affection for New Divinity pastors: men like Stephen West and Alvan Hyde. How would Stiles have explained the quite remarkable sale of twelve hundred copies of Hopkins' *System of Doctrine*? There were some congregations that did not want to be soothed by the clergy. They were attracted by "John-the-Baptist types," men of rude prophetic stamp who took a positive relish in preaching the hard sayings. In fact Americans generally, from the time of Edwards and Hopkins to the time of Eugene O'Neill and Reinhold Niebuhr, have been willing and often eager to listen to searing criticisms of themselves delivered point blank by their own intellectuals.

Actually, Stiles' most accurate judgment of the New Divinity was his perplexed admission that the best brains of the New England churches were New Divinity men. Though he himself could not see that this was a fair indication of just where the vital current in New England life was running, younger men could. From Channing we learn of the influence that Hopkins had on him at Newport: "I need not be ashamed to confess the deep impression which this system made on my youthful mind. I am grateful to this stern teacher for turning my thoughts and heart to the claims and majesty of impartial, universal benevolence." From Lyman Beecher's *Autobiography* we learn of the strong imprint that Timothy Dwight left on his mind.⁸

⁷ Stephen West, *Sketches of the Life of the Late Rev. Samuel Hopkins, DD.* (Hartford, 1805), pp. 58-66. Edwards A. Park, "Memoir," in *Works of Samuel Hopkins* (3 vols.; Boston, 1852), I, 68-71. The controversy between Hopkins and Israel Dewey, leader of the opposition, was long and drawn out. Dewey was censured by vote of the church for his "disorderly behavior in time of preaching" March 23, 1758. He offered to make confession in private, April 6, 1764. Hopkins asked for an ecclesiastical council, April 30, 1767. Great Barrington Church Records, p. 35, typescript by R. H. Cooke in Berkshire Athenaeum. Richard Birdsall, *Berkshire County: A Cultural History* (New Haven, 1959), pp. 75-76.

⁸ William Ellery Channing, *Works* (6 vols.; Boston, 1841-43), IV, 345-46. This should be balanced by noting that Channing found Hopkins' preaching voice incredibly bad and that he had even greater admiration for Stiles—not for his intellectual power

Abigail Williams Dwight, one of the more vigorous intellects in Western Massachusetts, wrote to a friend in Great Barrington of "my special obligations to the virtuous worthy Excellent Mr. Hopkins, my esteemed new friend . . . and [my thanks for] The happy share of grace and goodness he is so abundantly possessed of." Bostonians too seem to have joined in the respect for Hopkins. He served for many years as chaplain of a women's prayer meeting group, with which he would meet whenever he came to Boston.⁹ These samples suggest a significant feminine leaning toward the New Divinity—and women, after all, made up two-thirds of most congregations. One of New England's most perceptive women, Harriet Beecher Stowe, wrote of the New Divinity:

Edwards and Bellamy, and others . . . had broken up the crust of formalism and mechanical piety that was rapidly forming over the New England mind. . . . It is a mark of a shallow mind to scorn these theological wrestlings and surgings; they have had in them something even sublime. They were always bounded and steadied by the most profound reverence for God and his word; and they have constituted in New England the strong mental discipline needed by a people who were an absolute democracy.¹⁰

The more one investigates the social history of the New Divinity—that is, the more one inquires into just what the New Divinity meant to the man in the pew—the less he is inclined to accept Stiles' easy dismissal of the doctrine. The New Divinity men were intellectuals who provided a learned libretto for the emotions of "old Believers." It would appear that in a time of unpredictable change the New Divinity satisfied a profoundly conservative demand, particularly in the rural congregations—the demand that nothing vital in the old tradition be lost. Its clerics, with their excessive logic and precision, anticipated in a sense T. S. Eliot's dictum that in times of great change "The spirit killeth but the letter giveth life." Viewed as intellectual history, the works of Samuel Hopkins can be read by a modern so as to appear an absurd

but for his character, his tolerance and his wide learning. *Memoir of William Ellery Channing* by W. H. Channing (3 vols.; Boston, 1860), I, 31-32. *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, ed. Barbara M. Cross (2 vols.; Cambridge, 1961), I, 26-27. "[Dr. Dwight] had the greatest agency in developing my mind. . . . There was a pith and power of doctrine there that has not been since surpassed, if equalled."

⁹ Abigail (Williams) Dwight to Elizabeth West, October 19, 1767, Sedgwick Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society. Like Channing, Mrs. Dwight knew both Stiles and Hopkins—a quite close friend of Stiles in 1750, by 1770, she preferred, in theology at least, Hopkins, and she wrote Stiles asking him to destroy all her letters to him. Morgan, *Gentile Puritan*, pp. 78-89; Hopkins, *Works*, I, 67.

¹⁰ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Oldtown Folks* (1st ed., 1869, Boston, 1877), p. 25; "New England Ministers," *Atlantic Monthly*, I (February 1858), 487.

theology. Viewed as social history (that is, from the perspective of an eighteenth-century Newport listener), they appear more as a theology of the absurd, an *intentional* affront to human reason, an effort to state the classic paradoxes of the Augustinian-Calvinist world view in the most startling manner possible. It is true that most of the New Divinity men lacked the profound and positive faith of their founder Jonathan Edwards, and that they tried to make good this lack by an excess of logic and scholastic reasoning. But there remains a good deal of dignity in their position—a kind of passionate negativism such as was to appear later in Carlyle. They may not have had the substance of the old faith, but they understood what it meant and they were not willing to glide without protest into the easier, new-modeled salvation provided by a world of rational humanitarianism and nationalism.

Hopkins' obliviousness to the world of politics in the 1780s is in sharp contrast to Stiles' ecstatic visions of the new nation and its prospects. Indeed Stiles' election sermon of 1783, *The United States Elevated to Glory and Honour*, had a force and eloquence that his "moderate Calvinist" church sermons never attained. How ironical that it was Hopkins, with his revival-centered theology, who unwittingly helped Americanize New England, to break down the provincial exclusiveness of the New England Way—a way that Stiles revered and would protect! Consciously, however, the New Divinity men viewed "progress" with suspicion. A. C. McGiffert Jr. has written: "Unable to accept a moralism which identified religion with good citizenship, prosperity, the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man; orthodox Christianity unwittingly metamorphosed itself into a legalistic and dialectical system of doctrine, which is still its familiar characteristic."¹¹

It would be inaccurate, however, to represent the New Divinity solely in negative terms; the fact is that Hopkins achieved a positive religious vitality far exceeding that of Stiles and his inclination toward a rational theology. This vitality was rooted partly in the timeless psychological truths of Calvinism which the Hopkinsians more than any other group made relevant to late-eighteenth-century New England and partly in the religious tension created by Hopkins' insistence on the otherness, the radical transcendence of God. Hopkins' book, *Sin through Divine Interposition, an Advantage to the Universe* (Boston, 1759), conveyed a sense of the ambiguities of life that was evident in the Reformers of the sixteenth century and that appeared later in such "psychological Calvin-

¹¹ Arthur C. McGiffert Jr., in review of J. Haroutunian, *Piety versus Moralism, New England Quarterly*, V (October 1932), 823.

ists" as Nathaniel Hawthorne in the idea of the fortunate Fall.¹² But the peculiar exhilaration of the New Divinity was its dramatic statement of salvation by faith, the inadequacy of good works alone and the great distance between heaven and earth.

The old Calvinists had said pretty much the same thing, but their words had been worn smooth through usage; and through long contact with the New England culture, their religion had been moderated by, and to a degree fused with, that culture. Finally the revitalizing but culturally destructive effects of the Great Awakening had rendered the traditional statements inadequate. The high and risky tension of the New Divinity is characteristic of the prophetic tradition in Protestantism; it has been graphically described by Harriet Beecher Stowe in *The Minister's Wooing* when she tells of Hopkins' treatment of the ladder by which men might climb to heaven:

There is a ladder to heaven, whose base God has placed in human affections, tender instincts, symbolic feelings, sacraments of love, through which the soul rises higher and higher, refining as she goes, till she outgrows the human, and changes, as she rises, into the image of the divine. At the very top of this ladder . . . [is] the threshold of paradise. . . . This highest step, this saintly elevation, which but few selectest spirits ever on earth attain . . . this Ultima Thule of virtue had been seized upon by our sage as the *all* of religion. He knocked out every round of the ladder, but the highest, and then, pointing to its hopeless splendor, said to the world, 'Go up thither and be saved!'¹³

This was stern doctrine: it might precipitate a man into the "holy despair" known to earlier Puritans and thence either to the total commitment of faith or to a total rejection of Christianity. It would hardly allow him to temporize.

Our present-day understanding of the New Divinity is aided by the recent Neo-Orthodox reaction against the "liberal-protestant-bourgeois" synthesis with its too-facile harmonies.¹⁴ In a sense the New Divinity men have reappeared in the guise of the Neo-Orthodox young clergymen who flock from our divinity schools preaching the astringent doctrines of Kierkegaard, Barth and Reinhold Niebuhr. And New England congregations listen much as they did a century and a half ago in the same meetinghouses: some are offended and walk out, some are deeply gripped

¹² Herbert W. Schneider, *The Puritan Mind* (New York, 1930, Ann Arbor Paperback, ed. 1958), pp. 256-64.

¹³ H. B. Stowe, *The Minister's Wooing* (New York, 1859), pp. 87-88, quoted in C. H. Foster, *The Rungless Ladder*, p. 122.

¹⁴ The term "liberal-protestant-bourgeois synthesis" is used in James H. Nichols, *History of Christianity, 1650-1950: Secularization of the West* (New York, 1956).

by the new message, and many, while they do not buy the doctrine, still with a sort of New England cussedness are inwardly warmed to "see that young fellow standing up there giving 'em hell" in these bland but uncertain times. But of course the obvious difference is that the more sophisticated Neo-Orthodoxy was not developed on native grounds, whereas the New Divinity was nearly pure New England. Called by its historian Frank H. Foster *the New England theology*, the New Divinity remains one of the fullest expressions that the New England provincial mind in all its quirkiness, conservatism, inwardness and sublimity ever achieved.¹⁵

The paradox here is that the New Divinity was destructive of New England culture—that nice balance of congregation, town meeting, school and county courts that had developed over more than a century. Indeed the religion and culture had grown together so closely that some saw the Connecticut Valley as an "extension ladder to heaven" (to quote George Pierson's phrase).¹⁶ It was a condition that contributed to the development of a genteel tradition—the tendency to make culture itself a religion. The genteel begins, according to Frederic Carpenter, at the point where the great "I Am," the unknown God of piety is replaced by the great "Thou Shalt," the well-known God of conventional morality.¹⁷ The Great Awakening in all its passion and unpredictability can be seen as a kind of mass effort to return to the worship of the great "I Am." After the Awakening exploded through New England, fragmenting the old synthesis into "enlightened minds" and "raised affections," the New Divinity would attempt to preserve the emotional gains no matter what the social and cultural cost. And the cost was great. Most obviously their restrictive ideas on church membership would damage the harmony of town and congregation; they would not open the church to all those who had been culturally conditioned to moral behavior but only to those who had undergone the radical emotional experience of conversion. Judged from its effect on New England culture, the New Di-

¹⁵ Frank H. Foster, *A Genetic History of the New England Theology* (New York, 1907), p. 3: "the theological movement begun by Jonathan Edwards . . . became the molding force of a great part of the constructive religious work done in the United States."

¹⁶ George W. Pierson, "The Obstinate Concept of New England," *New England Quarterly*, XXVIII (March 1955), 6.

¹⁷ Frederic I. Carpenter, "The Genteel Tradition: a Re-Interpretation," *New England Quarterly*, XV (September 1942), 428-30. It would be unfair to call Ezra Stiles a genteel Puritan and yet he was slightly inclined that way. Morgan's term *gentle* places him perfectly. He was gentle in another sense too—in refusing to indulge in theological polemics against the New Divinity men. Instead, he bided his time, wrote acid character sketches of New Divinity men in his diary, and planned to write the history of New England churches in which he would set posterity straight on the New Divinity.

vinity pointed to a high and dangerous path as compared with the safer *via media* of those who would turn the church into a school for saints and sinners, make it an open communion where members would experience a gradual growth in grace from preaching and the sacraments.¹⁸ The New Divinity men soon found that their aim of reconstructing New England on a revival peak of religious intensity was impossible. Yet this failure did not appear to sap the intense energies of the movement. Instead, the energies were directed to different and more attainable goals.

In the Second Great Awakening (c.1799-1815), we see the New Divinity clergy and congregations turning to a kind of moralism. It is a moralism with a vengeance and a passion—to save New England from “Jacobinism,” to defend the Sabbath (by preventing travel, sports and work on Sunday), to set up Moral Societies to curb swearing and drinking. Most significant, the effort to reconstruct society on moral lines was turned outward—to the crusade of culture carriers to “New Englandize” the West, to the effort of the foreign missions movement to take Christianity to the Pacific Islands and the Orient, and to the movement to abolish Negro slavery.¹⁹ The emotional force or, if you will, the touch of fanaticism in these reform movements owed far more to the New Divinity than to the rational humanitarianism of Channing and the Unitarians. The emotional intensity of the original Puritans that was regained by Jonathan Edwards and preserved by the New Divinity men was a shaping force in American life far into the nineteenth century. Edmund Wilson has recently noted that Lincoln’s exalted view of the meaning of the Civil War, the driving force of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, and “most of the important products of the American mind at that time . . . grew out of the religious tradition of the New England theology of Puritanism.”²⁰ Further, the old Puritan enthusiasm kept recurring in individuals: Justice Holmes expressed a “New Lightism” detached from any creed in his famous statement: “That the faith is true and adorable which leads a soldier to throw away his life in obedi-

¹⁸ In many ways the New Divinity men represent what Ernst Troeltsch would call the “sect” mentality. Cf. *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (paperback ed., 2 vols.; New York, 1960), I, 331-56. The later movement of nineteenth-century New England religious life away from the “sect” toward the “church” is reflected in church architecture—the development of processional space with the moving of the pulpit and doors from the sides to the ends of the building. Cf. Edmund W. Sinnott, *Meeting House & Church in Early New England* (New York, 1963), pp. 71-134.

¹⁹ Oliver Elsbree, “The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in New England 1790-1815,” *New England Quarterly*, I (July 1928), 295-322. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-nineteenth Century America* (New York and Nashville, 1957).

²⁰ Edmund Wilson, “Abraham Lincoln: The Union as Religious Mysticism” in *Eight Essays* (New York, 1954), p. 189.

ence to a blindly accepted duty, in a cause which he little understands"²¹ —a view that would have scandalized his eminently reasonable father, and still more, Ezra Stiles. Another residue of the older Puritanism is William James' preference in religious life for the "twice born man"—the man who has found that the road to heaven runs through hell, the man who is converted only after a night journey of doubt and despair.²² James' development of this theme could be seen as a highly sophisticated version of Samuel Hopkins' insistence that a man should undergo a conversion experience that shook him to his roots and that the more secure route of a gradual growth in grace that Stiles advocated was inadequate.

In sharp contrast to this movement from the enthusiasm of the New Divinity to the enthusiasm of reform stands Ezra Stiles and his program for dealing with the chasm cut through New England's religious life by the Great Awakening. At first Stiles was an Old Light and viewed the Awakening as disastrous and destructive. He was not unaware of the logic of some of the New Divinity statements. He even drew up a list of twenty-eight "shocking positions and assertions which however true ought never to be made by man altho' proveable by reasonings to strict demonstration." For example, he cited: "God is the intentional efficient author of sin. . . . It is the duty of the damned to rejoice in their own damnation. . . . God never answers the prayers of the unregenerate."²³ Stiles was willing to leave it to the New Divinity men to apply such shock treatment to New England congregations. He would follow the Old Lights in carrying on an outwardly orthodox Calvinism and hope in time that people would simply forget the Great Awakening. Although staying aloof from the heated theological controversy of the period, Stiles began to move in his thinking and preaching a bit closer to the New Divinity views—emphasizing the Fall, "human nature in ruins" and man's need of divine grace. This was a considerable change from his earlier years when, influenced by the rational theologians of England, he had accepted Christianity principally because it was the most perfect moral system yet developed.²⁴ The reasons for his change were apparently his own religious experience and possibly too the sense that some of the Old Lights were slipping into heresy. Both Charles Chauncy and

²¹ Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., "The Soldier's Faith," *Speeches* (Boston, 1913), p. 60. Holmes' statement, in its negation of the individual ego, has a kind of resemblance to the famous test question: "Are you willing to be damned for the glory of God?"—a question used by Hopkins' enemies to define his system.

²² William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (Mentor ed., 1958), pp. 76-139.

²³ Stiles Papers, Yale University Library.

²⁴ Morgan, *Gentle Puritan*, pp. 168-72.

Joseph Huntington, for example, had come to believe in Universalism. Finally Stiles developed an Old Calvinist position which was supposedly as evangelical as the New Divinity but without its stern doctrine. He would summon New Englanders to forget the Great Awakening and reunite on the solid ground of the original New England Puritanism of Hooker, Shepard and Cotton. This solution had a certain plausibility, but indicated a degree of antiquarian detachment from the mainstream of New England history. To suggest in 1770 that the reintegration of religious life was possible through a simple movement back to the Old Calvinism is akin to suggesting that the Constitutional Union Party of Bell and Everett was the answer to the American schism of 1860. What Stiles thought to be a broad platform for all men of good will was more nearly the eye of a hurricane where the indifferent and men of a certain academic detachment might collect. His failure to see this was perhaps mainly due to his overestimation of the role of reason in human affairs. That history is unforgettable and irreversible is closely related to the fact that its movements are so deeply felt.

Stiles' prescription for the New England religious situation was so different from that of the New Divinity that one is almost inclined to see Erasmus and Luther on a miniature scale as he thinks of Stiles and Hopkins at Newport in the 1770s. Stiles, with his wide-ranging scholarship, his skill as an educator and his preference of practical ethics to discussions of theology, embodied something of the Erasmian humanism, while Hopkins, with his delight in the paradoxes of Christianity that flouted human reason and his interest in the inner drama of conversion, showed some resemblance to Luther. And this is a dualism that can be traced in later historians: some have agreed with Edmund Morgan and S. E. Morison in emphasizing the education and rational processes of the Puritan; others would concur with Alan Simpson in seeing the "stretched passion" of an intense faith as the ultimate essence of New England Puritanism.²⁵

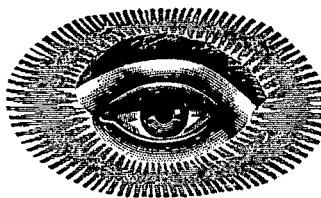
Perhaps Oswald Spengler too easily merges the one into the other in saying: "But in Puritanism there is hidden already the seed of Rationalism, and after a few enthusiastic generations have passed, this bursts forth everywhere and makes itself supreme. This is the step from Crom-

²⁵ Alan Simpson, *Puritanism in Old and New England* (Chicago, 1955, paperback ed., 1961), p. 21. "If the seventeenth-century Puritan, with his formal training in scholasticism, usually tries to give a rational account of his faith, it is the stretched passion which makes him what he is. They are people who suffered and yearned and strived with an unbelievable intensity; and no superstructure of logic ought to be allowed to mask that turmoil of feeling." Earlier Simpson wrote of Puritanism: "it was a holy violence under compression" (p. 6).

well to Hume. . . ."²⁶ This makes the line of development too simple and direct; the enthusiasts had more staying power than Spengler's statement admits and managed to create a dialogue and even sharp controversy along the way. It is to this dialogue between faith and reason that we owe much of the creativity of New England culture. In the words of Lionel Trilling: "A culture is not a flow, nor even a confluence; the form of its existence is struggle, or at least debate—it is nothing if not a dialectic."²⁷ New England's controversies then have been by no means a misfortune; they have usually been fought over real issues that come from deep but creative tensions in our culture.

²⁶ Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (2 vols.; New York, 1926-28), II, 305.

²⁷ Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination* (New York, 1950), p. 9.



Notes

Judgment on Poe

THE REVIEW ARTICLE IN *American Quarterly* BY STUART LEVINE, "SCHOLARLY Strategy: The Poe Case,"¹ contains some remarks on my study of Poe that seem to demand an answer because of the way in which my critical judgment is challenged.

Mr. Levine is not the first to deride my very high opinion of Poe. He is, however, to my knowledge, the first to attribute that opinion to inferior scholarship rather than to inferior criticism. ". . . when the time comes to evaluate Poe's worth," he says, "Mr. Buranelli apparently goes not to the best of what Poe criticism we have, but rather to the same sources from which he gleaned his biographical information. . . ."

This sentence is vulnerable to the obvious retort. What is the meaning of the word "best"? And how is one to recognize "the best of what Poe criticism we have" when he sees it? As I pointed out in my book, Poe has been evaluated in contradictory terms by a succession of eminent critics of whom Henry James and Edmund Wilson are the most familiar. Mr. Levine offers no proper criterion for preferring one side or the other, or for demurring to both.

The criterion he does offer strikes at the critical function as such. He imagines criticism to be "cumulative," piece added to piece in the manner of scholarship. The fallacy is evident.

Scholarship does indeed grow through increments, so that old ideas often must be discarded because they have been proven to be inconsistent with new and better information. Mr. Levine gives a good example of the process when he shows how the accumulation of biographical material has made it impossible for anyone who knows the subject to believe in the horrific Poe of Joseph Wood Krutch and Marie Bonaparte. Like D. H. Lawrence, they had too little evidence at their disposal to render a just verdict.

Criticism works in an entirely different way. It cannot be "cumulative" because it deals with values instead of facts. The occupation and duty of the critic is to exercise his proper faculties in his reading, and while

¹ XVII (Spring 1965), 133-44. Because *American Quarterly* publishes comments on articles but discourages formal debates which might include a rejoinder, Professor Levine was not invited to reply.

it is always prudent for him to be aware of what other critics are saying, he is in no way bound by their judgments. Even where a consensus exists, he may and should reject it if he considers it to be wrong. The consensus has failed too often in literary history to doubt this. Leavis on Milton is perhaps the most remarkable recent case in point.

Nor is evasion possible through appeal to the "best" criticism, however defined, for the critic who bows to superior wisdom does so with an assent quite unlike the scholarly acknowledgment that a fact is a fact. Despite Mr. Levine's implied assertion to the contrary, he necessarily consults his own aesthetic judgment as the court of last resort. There is no place else for him to go. Had he understood this, he would have seen the oddity in speculating about where I went for my evaluation of Poe.

Ironically, while assuming that my criticism is really bad scholarship he rejects my use of scholarship where it is perfectly valid. He disagrees with my statement that Poe is "the American writer of greatest significance in world literature," although I based my statement on "cumulative" evidence, the statistical and documented research of previous scholars in the field.

The factual data on Poe's influence do not prove him to be "America's greatest writer"—a critical opinion that escapes the empirical test—but they do suggest that this opinion, while possibly false, and certainly debatable, is less ridiculous than Mr. Levine supposes. There are critics, not all contemptible, who hold much the same opinion. Mr. Levine may expect to see more judgments "a little astonishing" in the future, and I hope that he will add them to his dossier concerning "the best of what Poe criticism we have."

VINCENT BURANELLI, *Princeton, N. J.*



Reviews

Conducted by Theodore Hornberger

The Growing Shelf of Franklinana¹

THREE NEW BOOKS AND A MANUSCRIPT EDITION OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, along with continuing production of Franklin's entire works by the American Philosophical Society and Yale University, all during the past year, indicate no abatement of perennial interest in Franklin as the many-sided, yet often elusive, representative of the American colonies. All of these new volumes prove the worth of the American Studies approach, for in varying degrees these books combine such different disciplines as history, literature, political science, journalism, graphic art and science to give us a well-unified, comprehensive view of Franklin and the century in which he lived. Because of the peculiarly unspecialized nature of the eighteenth-century attitude toward all knowledge and because of Franklin's several natural abilities, such an approach not only makes sense but indeed is essential.

Hanna's book on Franklin and Pennsylvania politics is perhaps the most interesting of the lot by reason of his highly critical attitude toward his subject. He examines with great critical verve Franklin's activities as a politician during the whole period of the Pennsylvania Assembly-Proprietary Party dispute (1750-76). This book contains many unpleasant facts about Franklin's struggle for power, his curious lack of party commitment (in his early career) and his strangely divided allegiances to Proprietors, Quakers, Crown and Radicals (roughly in that chronological order, but often with catlike jumps from one to the other when it suited his purpose) as he became a more seasoned politician. Hanna does not hesitate to point out Franklin's rather undemocratic attitudes toward people living outside Philadelphia during the campaign and election of 1764, his snobbishness toward Pennsylvania Germans. "Always in the background of Franklin's work in England," we read, "was his long

¹ William S. Hanna, *Benjamin Franklin and Pennsylvania Politics*. x, 239 pp. Stanford University Press, 1964. \$6.50. Bruce Ingham Granger, *Benjamin Franklin: An American Man of Letters*. ix, 264 pp. Cornell University Press, 1964. \$4.95. Robert F. Sayre, *The Examined Self: Benjamin Franklin, Henry Adams, Henry James*. xiii, 212 pp. Princeton University Press, 1964. \$4.75. Leonard W. Labaree, Ralph L. Ketcham, Helen C. Boatfield, Helene H. Fineman, editors, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. 351 pp. Yale University Press, 1964. \$12.50; \$1.95, paper. Leonard W. Labaree, Whitefield J. Bell, Jr., Ralph L. Ketcham, Helen C. Boatfield, Helene H. Fineman, editors, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Vols. I-VII. Yale University Press, 1959-63. \$10.00 per vol.

history of lobbying and politicking in behalf of causes not as evidently noble as American liberties." Wedderburn's vituperation fired at Franklin in the Cockpit affair is presented not so much as "bad manners and political stupidity" on Wedderburn's part as "the expression of long pent-up suspicions of Franklin's duplicity and lack of principles. . ." When Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1775, he was received jubilantly—a seemingly popular hero at home, because of the repeal of the Stamp Act and because he was thought of as a martyr for his mistreatment by the Privy Council. But, according to Hanna, our hero was actually suspect, not so much by the Tories as by the new radical groups that opposed the Crown. Franklin had many American enemies in 1776. Hanna summarizes this part of Franklin's development as full of devastating paradoxes, and he refers to these years (1750-76) as "this disastrous part of his political career," which he sees as ultimately redeemed, however, by luck, courage and vision. In his final assessment, he presents Franklin as "an old régime politician" who really had not helped Pennsylvania very much. Franklin's role in the constitutional convention of '76, we are told, was "more honorary than substantial." "There is no evidence," writes Hanna in the last note of the book, "to indicate that he had any significant influence on the form of the new government."

This sustained attack on Franklin is all the more remarkable because of the author's great care in working from primary sources. His notes and critical bibliography show command of his material. Hereafter, it will be difficult to gloss over the unpleasant aspects of Franklin's progress as politician. Disturbing as the book is, it nonetheless represents a substantial, valuable and useful achievement in the name of a more accurate appraisal of the ever changing image of the seemingly unchanging and enduring Franklin.

While Hanna concentrates strongly on history and political science, touching delicately here and there on Franklin's scientific and literary activities, Bruce Ingham Granger treats Franklin in a more literary manner, although he purports to study his career as a man of letters "in its historical and biographical context." The organization is "generic and chronological," but it also has two main divisions—public writings (periodical essay, almanac, letter to the press) and private writings (personal letter, familiar letter, bagatelle, autobiography)—and includes an introductory chapter on the literary background and a summarizing conclusion. In the literary background Granger traces "those books on logic, rhetoric and grammar" that most influenced Franklin, from Arnauld and Nicole (*Port-Royal Logic*) to Bunyan, Defoe, Addison, Swift et al., emphasizing the influence of Locke (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding*) and of John Hughes (*Of Style*).

Since the phrase "man of letters," which occurs in the title, is subject to various interpretations, it seems a little unfortunate that Professor Granger does not offer a definition. Too, he states in the preface that "the focus throughout is on those writings that have belletristic qualities" and then goes on to say, at the end of the first chapter, that "*utile* mattered far more than *dulce*." He reminds us that in Franklin's day both author and audience "judged a work successful or not insofar as it finally served a utilitarian, not an aesthetic end; mindful, too, that the overwhelming majority of these works were *not belletristic* [my italics], in the restricted sense in which we apply that term to lyric poetry, fiction, and drama." If this sounds a little confusing, we hasten to add that Professor Granger does have the ability to make clear and sharp distinctions in literary terms, which he ably demonstrates in his careful definition of the periodical essay as addressed to the "social rather than the individual consciousness" and in distinguishing rather finely between the personal and the familiar letter, and between the personal letter and the bagatelle.

Like Hanna's work, Granger's can be characterized as careful and scholarly. Despite some rehashing of material already covered in previous publications, he usually pays rigid attention to primary sources. And readers of this quarterly will certainly appreciate the broad historical, social, religious and economic background of eighteenth-century America, England and France that so effectively undergirds this generally literary presentation. Granger follows his stated method quite systematically; the first section of each chapter lays the historical and biographical foundation on which his more literary exposition rests. The book concludes with a short appendix on the textual history of the autobiography and a short bibliographical note.

Robert F. Sayre's book, *The Examined Self*, contains a short beginning, treating Franklin's autobiography (approximately forty pages), a long middle discussion of *The Education of Henry Adams* (about one hundred pages), and a middle-sized end, as artistic climax, with Henry James' *A Small Boy and Others* and *Notes of a Son and Brother*, the latter stemming from James' final period and apparently inspired by the passing of William James in 1910. It should be added that the author rings in Henry Adams and Franklin, and Ralph Ellison, in the final chapter.

Sayre's volume is well-organized and well-written, and he makes many perceptive comments about autobiographical writing as a genre, a largely unexplored territory in literary criticism. The fact that Adams and James were good friends who faced many of the same irresolvable problems of the industrial and scientific periods helps to integrate this book. The book is commendable for showing a long-range history of

American autobiography from the early eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century (with Ellison's *Invisible Man*). And an element of *sub specie eternitatis* is added by the fact that Adams considered Franklin and St. Augustine as embracing the two opposite poles of his own experience, or education. Although only a small part of this volume deals with Franklin, no serious student of American culture should forego reading it.

Coming now to the manuscript edition of the Franklin autobiography recently published by Labaree et al., we encounter in the introduction the complicated history of the manuscript and its various translations and publications. (The editors promise an even more detailed discussion of this bibliographical history "at the appropriate place in a future volume of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*.") Two reasons are given for preferring the original manuscript to the enlarged fair copy of William Temple Franklin (1818) edition: first, that it is more vivid, informal and easier to read; second, that Franklin wrote every word of it (the fair copy probably included some of Benjamin Bache's as well as William Temple Franklin's revisions). The editors report that there are "only very few places in which to revise" the already existing publication of the manuscript in Farrand's *Parallel Text Edition*. Thus the need for this new edition does not seem terribly pressing at this time. But since the years covered by the autobiography approximate those covered by the first seven volumes of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, the timeliness of the publication is apparent.

Franklin himself, who had a high regard for beautifully printed books, would have been pleased to see his *Memoirs* in their present attractively-boxed edition with its handsome format and splendid color reproduction of the David Morton portrait and the fine drawings by Gordon Cullen (based on earlier paintings, photographs, floor plans, etc.) of Bishop Shipley's house at Twyford, the Hotel de Valentinois near Paris, and Franklin's own house in Philadelphia—the three places where he is known to have worked on the autobiography. Also included are a fine facsimile page of manuscript, and at the end of the text, the outline which he supposedly followed, some helpful biographical notes, a chronology, a three-page critical selected bibliography and a much-needed and highly useful index.

The seven volumes of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* that have thus far appeared cover the period 1706-58 and constitute rich source material for any researcher in colonial culture. Franklin's early life as a writer and printer (1706-34) is covered in Volume One, which features the Dogood and Busy-Body papers and the beginning of the *Poor Richard Almanacks*. Volume Two is noteworthy for the extended religious controversy about the Rev. Samuel Hemphill and continues Franklin's later

development as printer and publisher during the period 1735-44. The third volume (1745-50) introduces Franklin's flair for public improvements and better education. Here, too, we find his early experiments in electricity. The remaining four volumes (1750-58) continue to record his scientific achievements and his municipal projects, but in the main deal with the Proprietary Party dispute that was to play such a central part in the next twenty-five years of his life. In more detail, Volume Four (1750-53) treats his part in helping to found and manage the Pennsylvania Hospital; Volume Five (1753-55), his contributions to the Carlisle treaty on the Indian question and the Albany Congress; Volume Six (1755-56), his quartermastering for the Braddock expedition. The seventh volume (1756-58) marks the end of Franklin's work on *Poor Richard's Almanacks* (with the possible exception of the 1765 edition) and the beginning of his immensely popular *The Way to Wealth*, prefaced with the editors' bibliographical essay (to the year 1800). Some of Franklin's correspondence on Negro education appears here, too. Volumes Six and Seven seem to contain more letters than do earlier volumes. This is particularly true of Volume Seven, which carries, besides several letters to his wife and to his sister, Jane Mecom, and to Elizabeth Hubbard, a large scientific correspondence with Peter Collinson, Cadwallader Colden, Beccaria and others. The editing and printing of this comprehensive publication have already been so highly commended by other reviewers that little more remains to be said in praise of these matters.

RICHARD E. AMACHER, Auburn University

American Art and the American Experience

A PASSION FOR DEFINING OUR NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS IS ITSELF ONE OF our most distinctive national characteristics, but those who bring forth books about the American tradition in art will derive small comfort from the huge show of American painting to be displayed until October 17 at the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

¹ These volumes are as follows: Albert TenEyck Gardner and Stuart P. Feld: *American Paintings, A Catalogue of the Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Vol. I, Painters Born by 1815*; Henry Geldzahler: *American Painting in the Twentieth Century*; Albert TenEyck Gardner: *American Sculpture, A Catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. These books are published by the museum but are distributed by the New York Graphic Society of Greenwich, Conn. The two volumes yet to appear will carry on from the first one listed, and will deal with the remainder of the Metropolitan's nineteenth-century American collection.

This exhibition, quite possibly the largest of its kind ever put on public view, confirms the idea that art has participated in every aspect of American experience and is itself no minor facet of that experience. Furthermore the American experience embodied here is far too large and far too varied to be confined under the rubric of any one style or even any manageable group of styles.

The show—which contains no less than 435 pictures covering a time span of three hundred years—is to some degree an outgrowth of the Metropolitan's long-term project for the cataloguing of its American collection. The museum owns some 1250 American pictures by 625 different hands; it also has exactly 354 pieces of American sculpture by 176 artists. None of this had ever been studied for a proper catalogue, but that study has been in process for some years, under the direction of Albert TenEyck Gardner, Stuart P. Feld and Henry Geldzahler of the museum's curatorial staff, and three of its projected five volumes were published concurrently with the opening of the show.¹

For many years the collection was assembled haphazardly, and entirely by gift. In an article published in the museum's bulletin, Gardner recalls how thirty-eight unfinished canvases by John F. Kensett descended at once on the Metropolitan in 1874 and how, at about the same time, "an association of gentlemen" presented a group of portraits by one Joseph Fagnani entitled *American Beauty Personified as the Nine Muses*. Many good and important pictures were given as well, but in preparing their exhibition Gardner and Feld selected a number of things which can only be regarded as documents in the history of American taste, not as documents in the history of our art.

This, in other words, is probably the first exhibition ever organized in which a deliberate effort has been made to display the weakness of historic American art as well as its strength. The theory behind this seems to be that our understanding of our art is now sufficiently mature so that we may benefit from studying the lapses and failures as well as the successes. The show abounds in totally unknown names—John Paradise, Thomas Hewes Hinckley, Samuel Hayden Sexton, Louis Lang, Joseph Kyle, Henry Mosler, George Augustus Baker—and many nearly forgotten artists, like Henry Peters Gray and Daniel Huntington, are brought back from the brink of limbo.

Interestingly enough, there has been little reattribution as a result of the making of the catalogue. The most important change is one whereby *The Deluge* is taken away from Washington Allston and given to an obscure Anglo-American artist named Joshua Shaw. This is a bitter blow to those of us who have been teaching our students, year in and year out, that *The Deluge* was one of Allston's masterpieces and a major document



1. *The Deluge* by Joshua Shaw (1777-1860). Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William Merritt Chase.



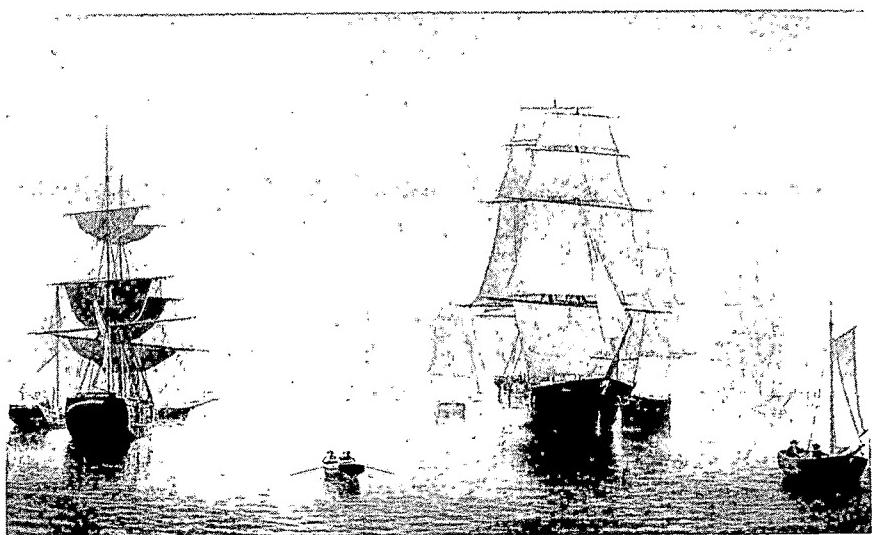
2. *Landscape: Theme from "Thanatopsis"* by Asher Brown Durand (1796-1886). Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan.

in the history of American romanticism. It remains a major document of romanticism, anyhow. The new catalogue reveals that ever since 1909, when the picture was given to the Metropolitan by William Merritt Chase (who firmly believed it to be an Allston), doubts concerning its authorship have been raised; and evidence pointing to Shaw in the form of sketches signed by him was discussed at length in the New York press not long after the painting was acquired. The present whereabouts of these sketches cannot be learned from the catalogue; and apparently nobody paid much attention to the story until last year, when J. P. Harthan showed up with a detailed description of the picture, as a work of Shaw, taken from a newspaper review of a show at the British Institution in 1813. In that same year a *Deluge* by none other than Turner was compared unfavorably with the one by Shaw. Shaw, obviously, is someone to be studied, if there is anything else of his that can be studied. He lived for many years in New Jersey, where he died in 1853.

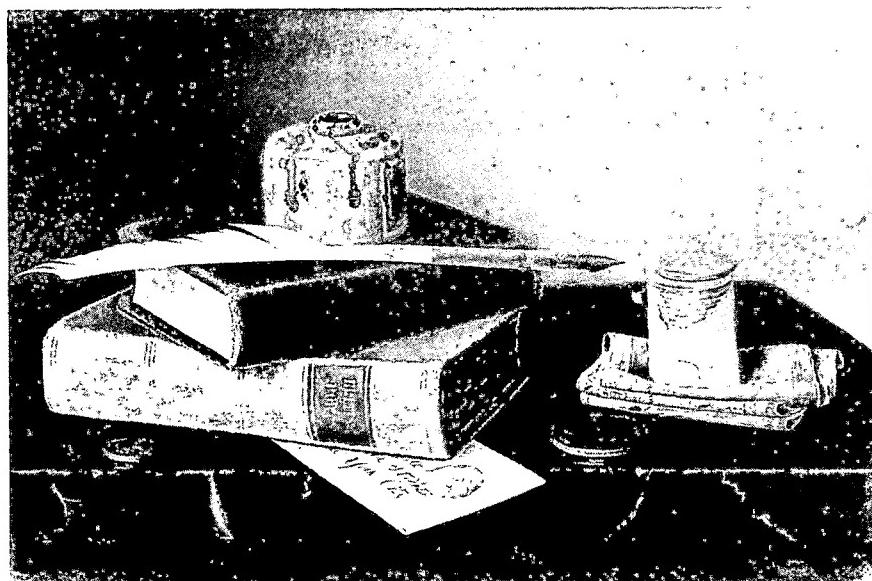
Practically every important aspect of American painting from 1670 to 1965 is represented in the show, but it provides no revelations of unsuspected genius among the artists of past or present. For me the most unexpected experience the exhibition affords is that of the magnificence of space, the pearly atmosphere, and the rainbows in the Andean landscapes of Frederick Church. The painters of grandiose mountain scenery, those who make up what James Thomas Flexner calls the Rocky Mountain School, are the last American artists to come back to serious attention. There is a whole gallery full of them at the Metropolitan—Church, Bierstadt, Cropsey and others—and I found it one of the most rewarding galleries of them all.

The historic section, that is to say, American painting up to 1900, fills thirteen rooms. It opens marvelously, with the enchanting, Dutchy portraits of the three Gibbs children of Boston by that past master of domestic winsomeness, the Freake Limner, who was considerate enough to date each picture 1670 and provide a starting point for the show.

Copley, Earl and Stuart are especially well represented among the portrait painters of the eighteenth century. There is a unique group of Benjamin Wests which came to the Metropolitan in one donation many years ago, but which have been infrequently exhibited and are little known. Among them are the entrancingly pompos, inflated and high-flown portraits of the Jamaica planter, Peter Beckford, and his wife, painted long after the deaths of the sitters to provide their son with "suitably impressive ancestor portraits for the theatrical interior of his fantastic neo-Gothic palace, Fonthill Abbey." As they wrote that, Gardner and Feld must have found it difficult to resist adding a "k" to that "neo-Gothic."



3. *Boston Harbor, Sunset* by Fitzhugh Lane (1804-1865). Metropolitan Museum of Art, Lent by Mr. and Mrs. Bronson Trevor.



4. *The Banker's Table* by William Michael Harnett (1848-1892). Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Elihu Root Jr.

The nineteenth-century rooms are dominated too much by the bourgeois portrait painters—Morse, Inman, Sully, Harding, Jarvis. Genre is neglected, and major genre, as represented by Blythe, Mount and Bingham, is more neglected still. Nevertheless there is the above-mentioned gallery of mountain landscapes; such Hudson River masters as Cole and Durand are seen to good advantage, and still life holds up its head from Raphaelle Peale through Francis and Roesen to Harnett and John Frederick Peto. Of the late nineteenth-century giants, only Homer comes off in keeping with his stature, thanks especially to a superb group of his seascapes. There is little Ryder, little Whistler, the Eakins group as a whole is less impressive than it ought to be, and the Sargents are—well, Sargents. There is a gallery of impressionists, including some exceptionally elegant Mary Cassatts and excellent landscapes by such as Willard Metcalf, Childe Hassam and John H. Twachtman, and a marvelous gallery of nineteenth-century primitives.

The atmosphere changes when one comes over into the twentieth-century section, because in this area the Metropolitan has been able to buy on its own, has relied relatively little on gifts, and has therefore been able to build a carefully balanced collection. The Eight, the generation of the Armory Show, the group of painters associated with Alfred Stieglitz and his galleries, the social critics of the 1930s, the abstract expressionists, the hard-edgists—nothing is neglected, although the more recent tendencies are represented with less numerous examples than the earlier and less important trends. The show ends with Rauschenberg, Johns and a glowing bit of op art by Ellsworth Kelly. There is no pop art, though; the Campbell's soup can, the Coca Cola bottle and the comic strip remain to be recognized by the Metropolitan.

The catalogues so far published provide a major addition to the literature. Rather marvelously, in addition to pulling together all the references, meaningful and otherwise, that diligent busy-work in libraries could provide, Gardner and Feld give us biographies of each artist and information about each subject, whether it be portrait, landscape or whatever. Each painting is illustrated, and most of the sculptures are also reproduced. For one reason or another, Geldzahler's book is not a catalogue but an essay on American painting in the twentieth century illustrated with pictures from the Metropolitan's collection; the detailed information about each picture which distinguishes a catalogue as such is absent from this volume.

An exhibition of this kind signalizes a coming of age for American art so far as the museum world is concerned. Institutions like the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the National Gallery have long since set up large,



5. *Lady at the Tea Table* by Mary Cassatt (1845-1926). Metropolitan Museum of Art,
Gift of the Artist.

inclusive permanent displays of American art, a National Portrait Gallery is in the works, the National Collection of Fine Arts is about to receive its own quarters and a boost from the government, and the Detroit Institute of Arts has set up the Archives of American Art to serve the national community. It is only in the academic world that American art remains unrecognized, little studied, a second-class citizen. And not only in academic art-history programs, but in programs of American Studies as well.

ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN, *San Francisco*

LEO MARX, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America.* 392 pp. Illus. Oxford University Press, 1964. \$6.75.

PROFESSOR MARX's book makes a sizable contribution to the process of rewriting American cultural and intellectual history which began in 1950 with the publication of Henry Nash Smith's seminal work *Virgin Land*. This work had a great deal to do with shifting the attention of younger scholars in the American Studies movement away from economic and environmental forces toward the crucial role of consciousness in shaping society. Behind Smith's work, of course, lay that of a generation of intellectual historians such as Arthur Lovejoy, George Boas, Merle Curti, Ralph Gabriel and Perry Miller.

Both Marx and Smith had been students of Perry Miller at Harvard. From Miller they learned a new kind of intellectual history which connected pivotal concepts and abstractions with underlying attitudes formed in social fray at the point where mind and body meet. They became less concerned with purely mental phenomena than with the total state of consciousness of persons living in a given social and cultural milieu. This concern was deepened by their familiarity with anthropology and the studies of myth which had been gaining headway in literary circles. The result is a new, more penetrating kind of cultural analysis cutting across traditional lines of academic inquiry. It is bound ultimately to influence specialists in every field: American historians, sociologists, literary critics, political scientists—even institutional economists.

Professor Marx also studied under F. O. Matthiessen, whose *American Renaissance* established another landmark in American scholarship. Matthiessen had a rare capacity for combining refined sensibility with an incorruptible social conscience—for appreciating, if you will, the fineness of Henry James without snubbing the more plebian Theodore Dreiser. Marx has much of this double awareness, together with a troubled divided allegiance which seeks the best of two worlds: that is, a democratic humanity served by a technology which does not destroy the ancient bond between man and nature. These qualities make Marx's book one of the very best of the growing number of works since the appearance of Smith's *Virgin Land* which reinterpret America for the atomic age.

Among this number must be counted, for instance, Frederick Carpenter's *American Literature and the Dream*, R. W. B. Lewis' *The American Adam* and John William Ward's *Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age*—all published in 1955. More recently have appeared Loren Baritz's *City on a Hill*, Edwin Fussell's *Frontier: American Literature and the American West* and Alan Trachtenberg's *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol*. Others are certain to follow. Indeed, Howard Mumford Jones'

O Strange New World, the first in a projected two-volume work, is in many ways a popularization of this point of view. Professor Marx's own work has been long in preparation, dating back more than ten years. He must often have felt frustrated to see other workers in the new world vineyard gather prizes before him. But first-rate minds have a way of leaving a memorable mark whenever they come. Marx's is one of the first-rate minds in contemporary American scholarship and, among these, one of the very few which is not pedantic.

He sets a literary pace which is leisurely and urbane, yet filled with a sense of wonder and discovery. In this, he reminds us of Robert Frost, whose poems invite the reader to participate in a creative process which unfolds gradually the "inmost bud." Marx lets us see his own perplexities as he reads and responds to the documents before him. In this way, he not only establishes a rapport with the reader, but helps us to establish an inward relationship with his materials which is almost personal. The three photographs accompanying his text are intensely personal and poetic rather than public. One feels deeply their cultural import even without words and concepts. By contrast, Loren Baritz in his *City on a Hill* gives us a hard, bright, authoritative gloss which pretends to disavow any personal commitment or involvement in the culture as he summarizes the representative works of eight Americans from Winthrop to Melville.

Baritz approaches his material from outside, Marx from the inside. Baritz would be the detached recorder, the scientific historian of consciousness; whereas Marx is a troubled, sensitive, associated consciousness living in past and present. Thus, we find that his first impressions of Shakespeare's "American fable," *The Tempest*, need qualifying: though Prospero's triumph seems in the end to affirm an intellectual and humanistic ideal of high civilization, Marx writes, "We still must cope with . . . our initial impression that in *The Tempest* Shakespeare glorifies nature, the island landscape, and the rusticity of Prospero's little community." He concludes—even allowing us our doubt—that the play endorses the way of Prospero rather than the primitivism of Gonzalo. It is the way of the "middle landscape" which was transplanted to America as fact, not mere pastoral fancy.

What does Marx's brief add to recent scholarship that is new? After all, he covers much the same material with much the same orientation; yet he gives an over-all impression of freshness. Does this novelty lie mainly in his *method*? No one else has been so frankly personal, so sensitive as a reader, so free in making judgments about the *tone* of an historical period or work. We are privy again and again to well-documented estimates concerning Jefferson's "ardent devotion" to the rural ideal and the "cool, analytic, pragmatic tone" in which he dismisses it—or the

"overblown exclamatory tone" of apologists for industry, the "distinct millennial tone" of Emerson's reactions to change and his "well-turned evasions," the difference between Carlyle's indictment of the machine and "the aesthete's nostalgic and facile rejection of industrialism." Or we are given to understand by "the florid, unabashedly trite language" in *Ethan Brand* "how perfectly Hawthorne has caught the sickly sweet, credulous tone of sentimental pastoralism." Often in the American version of the pastoral—as with Melville or Mark Twain—"the dominant tone is affirmative, the undertone is sceptical."

Professor Marx listens at the cultural keyhole less for the sense of words than for their more revealing *undertone*. His favorite words for describing what he overhears are "contradiction," "paradox," "tension." In effect, he has reduced R. W. B. Lewis' "cultural dialogue" to just two contending voices. As he puts it, "The contrast between the machine and the pastoral ideal dramatizes the great issue of our culture." He analyzes this central conflict with great subtlety and insight, finding that Americans have faced an impossible choice between two modes of perception: one aesthetically and emotionally satisfying, yet illusive; the other analytically and practically effective, yet devoid of all but utilitarian value and meaning. We have not yet resolved this problem. Marx concludes that we need new symbols of possibility: "The machine's sudden entrance into the garden presents a problem that ultimately belongs not to art but to politics."

This would presumably be a new politics to meet the demands of massive technological and social change. Professor Marx is surely right in emphasizing the tensions created by machine culture. He goes beyond his scholarly predecessors in recognizing this as the central problem of American life. Yet his analysis is somewhat misleading. It creates the impression that because the problem is manifest in the works which he examines, including such unlikely books as *Moby-Dick* (and here I cannot disagree), a majority of Americans feel similarly pressed and pinched between the dilemma's horns and hence are ripe for a new style of politics. I could not disagree more. The majority of Americans have long since identified material progress with their new Eden and are only lately showing signs of real distress. Human beings have a vast capacity for satisfying rationalization and self-deception which renders them immune to stress and truth alike—until they are overtaken by a major catastrophe of long endurance. Primitive societies are thus notoriously stable over long periods of time, even though they are tyrannized by an authority and routine far more oppressive than anything yet produced by machine culture. Professor Marx's book is, in this sense, still a minority report on the national psyche.

His account of how Americans adapted an essentially literary point of view—that of the pastoral convention—to New World circumstances is intriguing, but not altogether convincing. A popular vogue for landscape borrowed originally from arts and letters fails to explain fully the sense of urgency and even of doom with which many Americans greeted the industrial revolution. It is not enough to say that these Americans tended to confuse the pastoral ideal with agrarian reality, forgetting the literary design or reading it into the pattern of society. By highlighting the pastoral mode, of course, Marx reminds us again of the great influence which the Classical Revival had during the formative period of the new nation and of the importance of our Graeco-Roman heritage. But he overlooks the fact that this influence was less important and less enduring, finally, than that of the Protestant Reformation. Though Marx goes back to the Renaissance in his reconstruction, he significantly omits the Reformation and its aftermath in the American colonies. Christian religion, not the pastoral, invested the American landscape with special meaning. It transformed America into God's country, reserved for a chosen people. The original model was not Arcadia, but the Garden of Eden.

The American imagination—if we consider the work of Fitzgerald, Faulkner and Steinbeck—is still more apocalyptic and millennial than pastoral in its hope of transforming the earth into a garden of felicity. This millennial hope, focused upon America and born out of man's eternal longing for a better life, is the true source of that "heightened sensitivity" which greeted the onset of industrial power and which was, in large part, able to contain it. Marx sometimes understands this, for he occasionally invokes the pastoral and the image of the garden interchangeably, and he derives "the technological sublime" ultimately from Christian teleology as modified by the new science of Newton and Locke. He does not understand, however, that the meaning of *memento mori* (*Et in Arcadia Ego*) is better conveyed to Americans (who must still be counted in a minority) by that part of the Christian myth of the Garden which deals with the Fall. Fear of the machine was an extension of the fear of the devil and of devilish knowledge imported from a supposedly hellish Europe. The fear of moral corruption and expulsion from Paradise was countered during the early years of industrialism in America only by the greater fear of economic prostration at the feet of wicked old Europe. The American Adam and not the shepherd remains the archetypal figure from our past which troubles our dreams in the present. But not all our dreams are troubled. The "American Dream" includes a rationalizing faith in material progress and success which has developed out of the "technological sublime."

If we make this allowance—is it really a major point?—Professor Marx's thesis is completely valid for the works which he examines. The main source of tension in American writing derives from the felt opposition between two cardinal images of value, the machine and the garden. The symbolic statement of the problem in a related series of polarities had nonliterary causes. That is, the actualities of American experience have tended to reinforce a natural dialectical predisposition of the mind. All thought and feeling in this country has been profoundly affected by the rapid transformation of a rather simple agrarian nation into a highly complex urban civilization. Rationalization has eased many of the resulting tensions.

CHARLES L. SANFORD, *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute*

ERNEST SAMUELS, *Henry Adams: The Major Phase*. xv, 687 pp. Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1964. \$10.00.

THIS third volume completes Ernest Samuels' monumental biography—a work which his subject would have admired and hated. Adams' idea of definitive scholarship demanded that nothing be omitted which could possibly be of use: every future student will depend on Samuels for his comprehensive logging of Adams' literary remains, published and unpublished; for his setting Adams' acts and opinions in precise chronological relation and in carefully elucidated intellectual relation to the books he was reading or the changeful political and philosophical role he played; for his working out in detail the origins, the dates of composition and the editorial history of Adams' books. But aside from being indispensable, this biography is also the rich portrait of one of America's greatest and most wayward geniuses; and Adams, though he believed that public figures must not flinch from the glare of public examination, violently insisted that all biographers were murderers and that the victim need not love his killer.

The way scholarship becomes a murder weapon is explained by a letter from Henry Adams to his brother Brooks: "Thanks entirely to our family-habit of writing, we exist in the public mind only as a typical expression of disagreeable qualities." The statement certainly holds for the Adams of the 1890s. The momentum of completing his *History* carried him five years past the death of his wife, but after 1890 moral exhaustion and emotional perplexity took over. In a decade of personal crisis, Adams became a wicked-tempered, obscurantist, nihilistic old man. The dismal record of that process almost overshadows the survival and even the growth of his remarkable intelligence, curiosity, sensitivity and human

warmth. The enormous imaginative achievement of the *Chartres* and the *Education*, the verve of the letters, the capacity for new friendships and new interests constitute the major phase that began after he was sixty. His friendship with Bernard Berenson, which Professor Samuels has been the first to canvass in detail, is a case in point: despite Adams' monumental snobbery and virulent anti-Semitism, he came to prize the great connoisseur and self-made aristocrat on his own terms. Adams, the purveyor of cosmic terrors and the victim, as Elizabeth Cameron so penetratingly suggested, of unspeakable fears, turns out to be congruent with Adams the engaged and responsive connoisseur of language and intellectual aristocrat. Professor Samuels shows us how profoundly self-characterizing Adams was in his description of Gothic: "The delight of its aspirations is flung up to the sky. The pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt is buried in the earth as its last secret." When the dark secret is out, the delight of the art seems only the more wonderful.

J. C. LEVENSON, *University of Minnesota*

American Studies in Transition, edited by Marshall W. Fishwick. 329 pp. University of Pennsylvania Press, 1964. \$7.50.

American Character and Culture, edited by John A. Hague. v, 176 pp. Everett Edwards Press, Inc., 1964. \$2.95.

ALTHOUGH the editors of these two collections of essays make no such extravagant claims, it seems natural to view these volumes as attempts to evaluate the achievements of American Studies and suggest directions for further development. Mr. Fishwick's book is more concerned with problems of interdisciplinary research and teaching and the international reception of American Studies, Mr. Hague's with current illustrations of scholarship in American Studies.

Several attempts at reorienting American Studies come first in Mr. Fishwick's book. Both John Kouwenhoven and Warren French feel too exclusive a dependence on verbal records and assert the cultural importance of other artifacts. Kouwenhoven would like to see more of the "sensory thinking" of the archaeologist and anthropologist supplant the "verbal thinking" of literary and historical scholars. French also seems antiverbal in urging the importance of "significant relics," by which he means primarily pictorial representations and motion pictures as key means of understanding American culture. The most pointed argument against the academic, aesthetic and scholarly bias of the American

Studies movement is Patrick Hazard's re-direction of American Studies into an information-supplying and policy-shaping agency for the mass media and the humanities, a domestic and academic U.S.I.A. (There is presumption and condescension here which, while it may not prompt our colleagues in history, literature and the social sciences to burn our files of *AQ*, may precipitate more subtle forms of academic vengeance.) Ralph Gabriel, in considerably more temperate fashion, imparts a policy role to American Studies—the necessity of bringing together the highest ideals of each of C. P. Snow's two cultures if the United States is successfully to assume the responsibilities of power.

In other essays John Ashmead presents some interesting correspondences in painting, literature and culture at large; Sigmund Diamond tries to extend to parochial historians and social scientists the salvation of humanism; and Henry Wasser suggests methods of setting up hypothetical models and complementary alternatives—to borrow from the approaches of contemporary science—as parts of "the effort to comprehend the totality of American culture." Brooke Hindle, Robert J. Cooke and Roy F. Nichols explain differing ways of making history a more meaningful synthesis, and John A. Hague and Richard E. Sykes broaden this discussion of cultural synthesis by describing various techniques in detecting cultural patterns and probing the imagination. Several essays on the impact and relevance of American Studies to other nations and cultures conclude the collection.

Mr. Hague's collection faces the problem of an indeterminate audience. An essay by Gerald E. Critoph traces the opposition of Jeffersonian and Hamiltonian ideals through American history and is aimed at undergraduates; by contrast Murray Murphey's contribution subjects the terms "culture," "character" and "personality" to rigorously logical analysis in a manner accessible only to those most familiar with the techniques and concerns of contemporary philosophy.

Six of the ten essays here have been previously published as pamphlets under the auspices of the Charles E. Merrill Lecture Series in American Studies at Stetson University and have reached many ASA members in that form. The four new essays would have to be especially good if the collection is to be something more than an institutional advertisement.

The first of these, by Marshall Fishwick, is a piece of nimble journalism which amplifies the notes struck in Fishwick's preface to his own collection; warns against "time-honored clichés about American optimism," and concludes by agreeing with Emerson that we now need "men and

women of original perception and original action." In less than a dozen pages, Mr. Fishwick touches on the Theater of the Absurd, Existentialism, cultural pluralism, American Studies at home and abroad, and presents capsule summaries of six book-length examples of interdisciplinary scholarship during the past decade. Mr. Hague's essay, which ends this collection, summarizes the significance of nineteenth- and twentieth-century American experience to conclude that "our commitment to seek the truth" and our willingness to change without sacrificing the dignity of human existence constitute "the source of our strength." There is much ammunition here for the commencement address (new style); and Morrell Heald's rather sanguine appraisal of the impact of technology on American life and Robert S. Chauvin's announcement of the fast-approaching Golden Age of the South contribute more of the same.

Only David Potter, on "American Women and the American Character," Stow Persons, on the role of public opinion in democratic theory and practice, and Albert E. Stone Jr., on "Henry James and Childhood," provide more than superficially instructive contributions.

MARVIN FISHER, *Arizona State University*

WILSON O. CLOUGH, *The Necessary Earth: Nature and Solitude in American Literature*. xiv, 234 pp. University of Texas Press, 1964. \$5.00.

PROFESSOR CLOUGH, in this work, which he offers "more as an essay than an exercise in research scholarship" presents an extended chronological exploration of what "an original, untamed nature in a New World and the experience of men isolated upon its shores may have contributed to the formation of something vaguely to be labelled the American mind, the American way, and native strain in American literature." His volume is an expansion of three lectures given in 1960 as a part of the William Robertson Coe Summer Conference in American Studies at the University of Wyoming.

In the first section, "The Shock of Geography," he traces the effect of vast spaciousness and isolation upon the men of the period of exploration and settlement in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He goes on to explore the impact of this same phenomenon upon the social and political thinking of eighteenth-century America. He sees the experience of this phenomenon as leading in one direction to the early nineteenth century's quest for a native American literature and as underlying in another direction "The Cult of the Badman of the West."

In his second section, "Frontiers of Thought," he develops from the statement of Thoreau that "the frontiers are not east or west, north or

south; but wherever a man *fronts* a fact" an analysis of the great literature of the Transcendental period in terms of the birth of a native *metaphor*. Besides treating our native religious experience somewhat in the terms of Perry Miller and giving a treatment to the native influences upon Emerson, Thoreau and Whitman, Professor Clough points in a unique way to Hawthorne, Melville and Poe as examining the cost of this American *experience* of solitude.

His last section, "Variations on a Theme," traces the residue of this *metaphor* arising from this American *experience* upon the late nineteenth-century literature as the frontier closed and upon twentieth-century literature as the memory of the frontier has faded.

Professor Clough's essay is delightful and provocative. It raises echoes in one's mind of *Virgin Land* and *The American Adam*. It reinforces abundantly Reisman's concept of the innerdirected man. However, its final section seems weak and thus would seem to strengthen Prof. Robert Spiller's belief that American literature must be explained in cycles rather than as a linear developing tradition.

THOMAS RICHARD GORMAN, *Loyola University, Chicago*

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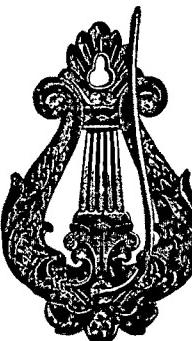
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CANADIAN ORDERS: MCGILL UNIVERSITY PRESS

American Calendar

Summer

1965



OHIO-IND. In cooperation with the American Folklore Society and the Hoosier Folklore Society, and under the sponsorship of the Department of English, Purdue University, the Ohio-Indiana chapter of the ASA engaged in the Mid-America Conference on Literature, History, Popular Culture and Folklore, on the Purdue campus May 14 and 15, 1965. Papers presented included: Tristram P. Coffin, University of Pennsylvania, "Real Use and Real Abuse of Folklore in the Writer's Unconscious"; Louis J. Budd, Duke University, "Mark Twain and the Upward Mobility of Taste"; Leo Stoller, Wayne State University, "Utopia and Reform as a Literary Pattern"; Bruno Nettl, "Influences of Western Civilization on North American Indian Music"; C. E. Nelson, Purdue University, "The Ballad of 'Thomas Rhymer': Its Eighteenth-Century Origin and Its Subsequent Tradition"; David Sanders, Harvey Mudd College, "John Hersey: War Correspondent into Novelist"; Archie Green, University of Illinois, "Labor Lore:

Meanings and Uses"; Edwin H. Cady, Indiana University, "The Strenuous Life" as a Theme in American Cultural History"; Carl Bode, University of Maryland, "The Unpublished History of the ASA"; Louis Filler, Antioch College, "Indiana: A Tale of Two Authors, Theodore Dreiser and David Graham Phillips"; Américo Paredes, University of Texas, "The Anglo-American in Mexican Folklore"; Russel B. Nye, Michigan State University, "Alger, Patten, Stratemeyer and the Juvenile Approach to American Culture, 1870-1930." The Conference was under the direction of Ray B. Browne, Purdue.

WIS.-N. ILL. On April 10 the Wisconsin-Northern Illinois chapter held a meeting at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison, at which the following four papers were read: Paul Schmunk, Wisconsin State University, Whitewater, "Wisconsin Spiritualism"; Walter Peterson, Milwaukee-Downer College, "The Gospel of Poverty"; John G. Cawelti, University of Chicago,

"America on Display: A Comparative Discussion of the World's Fairs of 1876, 1893, 1933"; and Iverne Dowie, Augustana College, "The Two Worlds of George Malcomb Stephenson. Professor Merle Curti was honored by the University of Wisconsin at the meeting.

MID-CONT. The Midcontinent chapter held its Spring meeting April 3, 1965, on the Southern Illinois University campus, at Alton, Ill. The conference theme was "The Settling of St. Louis," and the following papers were presented: J. F. McDermott, Southern Illinois, "The French Settlement of St. Louis"; Ernst Stadler, technician for Anheuser-Busch, "The German Settlement of St. Louis"; John Q. Reed, president of MASA, "The Minor Writer in American Studies"; and Elliott Rudwick, Southern Illinois, "Fifty Years of Negro Settlement in East St. Louis." Chairman of the meeting was Nicholas Joost, Southern Illinois.

N. Y. STATE. On May 1, at Hobart-William Smith Colleges, at Geneva, N. Y., the New York state chapter held its annual Spring meeting. Under the joint chairmanship of Kendall Birr and William J. Lowe, president and vice president of NYASA, the following four papers were presented on the theme "1984 Revisited": Marvin E. Mengeling, Clarkson College, "The Federal Government and Literature: Nineteen Years After"; David Marcell, Skidmore College, "De-

mocracy and the Problems of Privacy"; Richard Kendall, SUNY at Albany, "Cold War is Peace: Orwell and International Relations"; George Kateb, Amherst College, "1984 and the Hatred of Politics."

MID-ATLANTIC. ASA of the Middle Atlantic States held its Eleventh Annual Spring meeting April 3 at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pa. The theme of the meeting was "The Arts in America: Private or Public," and the program consisted of papers by Anthony N. B. Garvan, University of Pennsylvania, "The Governor's Party and Artistic Innovation in Boston, 1700-1725"; Richard K. Doud, Winterthur Museum, "WPA and the Arts: They Called it Boondoggling"; and Theodore Taylor, Smithsonian Institution, "Some Aspects of Government and the Arts Today"; a session of contemporary music, and a slide demonstration by Harold Sandak, of Sandak Inc., "Arts of the United States—A Survey in Color." Officers for the coming year, elected at the meeting, are George P. Winston, Lafayette College, president; John J. Reed, Muhlenberg, vice president; and Craig Gilborn, Winterthur Museum, secretary-treasurer.

NY METS. The Metropolitan chapter of New York met at Barnard College on April 30 for a meeting devoted to the theme "Poverty in the United States." The meeting took the form of a panel discussion, moderated by Sigmund

Diamond, Columbia University. Three panelists addressed the question: Victor Fuchs, Columbia University, "Poverty: Some Problems of Definition, Analysis and Policy"; Mitchell I. Ginsberg, Columbia University, "Poverty: The Humane Equation"; and William vanden Heuvel, Office of Economic Opportunity, "Poverty: Toward Governmental Solutions." A dinner address was given by Robert Lekachman, Barnard, "The Great Economy."

KY-TENN. On March 26-27 the Kentucky-Tennessee chapter held its Spring meeting at Eastern Kentucky State College, at Richmond, Ken. Papers presented were: Leah M. Park, Vanderbilt University, "Edwin Mims: Popularizer of the Southern Liberal Tradition"; Edward Hagemann, University of Louisville, "Stephen Crane Meets the Police"; Bruce Denbo, University of Kentucky Press, "The Myth of Southern Culture"; and Richard Drake, Berea College, "An American Studies Program: Projections and Problems." The program was directed by George Robinson, of Eastern. Professor Robinson was elected president for the coming year, and Robert L. White, University of Kentucky, who has been acting secretary, was elected secretary-treasurer.

BRITISH. The British Association for American Studies held its annual conference at Leeds, April

9-12. Departing from past practice, the BAAS abandoned a central theme for the meeting, choosing instead to learn about the work being actively pursued by a variety of outstanding scholars. The scholars, and their papers, were: Cleanth Brooks, American Cultural Attaché, "The Southern Temper"; Alastair Buchan, Institute for Strategic Studies, "Aspects of Current American Strategic Thinking"; David Riesman, Harvard University, "Some Major Developments in Contemporary American Society"; William Van O'Connor, University of Minnesota, "Wallace Stevens and Impressionism in America"; Lance Davis, Purdue University, "Some Aspects of the Comparative Development of the United States and the United Kingdom in the Nineteenth Century"; John W. McCoubrey, University of Pennsylvania, "Contemporary American Painting"; Barry J. Garner, Bristol University, "Problems of Political Fragmentation in the Chicago Metropolitan Area"; W. H. G. Armytage, University of Sheffield, "The Rise of the Technocrats"; Allan Nevins, Queen's College, Oxford, "The Place of Big Business in American History."

COMMONWEALTH. Volume I, Number 1, of the Canadian Association for American Studies' *Bulletin* emerged in the Spring, edited by Stephen J. Scheinberg and Frank Chalk, of Sir George Williams University, Quebec. The publication

carries a description of the first meeting of the CAAS, October 2-3, 1964, at McGill University and Loyola College, Montreal, as well as a description of the first American Studies Conference of the newly formed Australian and New Zealand American Studies Association, held in Melbourne, August 13-18, 1964. The Canadian meeting was devoted to organizational problems, including a survey of the "American" curricular offerings of eleven Canadian institutions. The Melbourne meeting featured papers from Merle Curti, University of Wisconsin, Lewis Leary, Columbia University, and Curtis Martin, University of Colorado. The Australian-New Zealand Association is under the direction of an Executive Committee, with T. H. Jones, Newcastle University College, secretary, and R. K. Brissenden, Australian National University, treasurer. CAAS officers for 1965 are: Geraint N. D. Evans, McGill University, president; Richard S. Thoman, Queen's University, vice president; Peter M. Buitenhuis, University of Toronto, secretary; and Peter A. Quartermain, University of British Columbia, treasurer. CAAS plans include an Autumn 1965 conference at Victoria College, University of Toronto.

JAPAN. At International House, in Tokyo, on January 11-12, 1965, The American Studies Foundation of Japan held an American Studies Conference. Nearly one hundred

and eighty Japanese scholars attended the Conference, and listened to thirty papers delivered in sixteen sessions. A program for the conference, complete with summaries of each session, can be obtained from the American Studies Foundation, Dai-ichi Seimei Bldg., Yurakucho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan.

MS AWARDS. Alfred A. Knopf will award a prize of \$5,000 for the best written manuscript in the field of western American history submitted by October 31, 1965. The prize will be an outright grant, over and above royalty arrangements. For purposes of the award, western means that part of the United States west of the Missouri River. To quote Mr. Knopf, "Sound scholarship will be taken for granted; the manuscript that wins the prize simply must be literature. It must be complete and not a work of fiction." There are no limitations on length, but a desirable range is one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand words. Manuscripts and correspondence should go to Ashbel Green, Managing Editor, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. The winner will be announced early in 1966. . . . Harper and Row has inaugurated the John F. Kennedy Memorial Award for biography or history, including current history. Eligible manuscripts must be of general interest and should "illuminate the influence of an individual or individuals on his or

their times," and should foster an understanding of this country or its role in the world. The publisher will pay the winner \$10,000, of which \$2,000 is an outright grant and \$8,000 a guarantee of minimum royalties. The publisher expects to make the award annually, and deadline for the receipt of manuscripts to be considered for the initial award is December 31, 1965.

NEW JOURNAL. The Smithsonian Institution's Museum of History and Technology will begin publication, in the first half of 1966, of an illustrated scholarly journal of general history. The journal is specifically designed to publish extensively illustrated manuscripts, and, to make the illustrations most useful, a high quality of printing and engraving will be maintained. Articles are not limited geographically or by subject matter. The editorial board of the journal is made up of professional historians on the staff of the Museum. Manuscripts, which are invited both from the United States and abroad, should be accompanied by illustrations suitable for occupying one-fourth or so of the space devoted to the article. After publication, authors will be paid \$100 in lieu of photographic expenses incurred. A prize of \$200 will be awarded for the best article in each volume. For further information write Dr. Walter F. Cannon, Editor, *MHT Journal*, Room

B-509 MHT, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

TV. Edinboro State College, Edinboro, Pa., will offer this fall a closed-circuit television course in American Studies. The primary emphasis of the course will be upon American literature, and the course designers, John Marsh and John Dove, have prepared a special text, *American Literature, A Televised Approach*. *American Quarterly* will be a tool in the course: Students will use the bibliographical supplement as a basis for a research paper.

CONFERENCES. The graduate school and the department of history of the Ohio State University staged a conference on history and literature January 21-22, 1965, in honor of Foster Rhea Dulles, professor of history at Ohio State since 1941. Four major papers were featured: Daniel Aaron, "The Treachery of Recollection: the Inner and Outer History"; Edward Lurie, Wayne State University, "American Scholarship: A Subjective Interpretation of Nineteenth-Century Cultural History"; Stow Persons, State University of Iowa, "The Origins of the Gentry"; and Russel B. Nye, Michigan State University, "History and Literature: Branches of the Same Tree." The conference was directed by Robert H. Bremer, Ohio State University. . . .

The *Seventeenth Conference on Early American History* was held in Nashville, Tennessee, April 2-3,

1965, under the sponsorship of Vanderbilt University. Papers included: Darrett Rutman, University of Minnesota, "Political Realities and the Democratic Urge in Early Massachusetts"; Lawrence H. Leder, "The Colonial Newspaper: Self-Conscious Exponent of Freedom"; William R. Taylor, University of Wisconsin, "The American Family at the End of the Eighteenth Century"; and Wilson Smith, University of California at Davis, "Intellect in Society: A Problem for the Historian of Colonial American Education." . . . The *Eighteenth* Conference on Early American History was held in Washington, D. C., on April 9-10, 1965, sponsored by Georgetown University. Papers included: Nicholas Varga, Loyola College, "The Concept of 'Party' in the Historiography of Colonial New York"; Richard M. Brown, Rutgers University, "The South Carolina Backcountry's Generation of Violence, 1760-1785"; and Robert M. Calhoon, University of North Carolina, "Critics of Colonial Resistance, 1774-1775."

MMLA. The Midcontinent chapter of ASA met in a joint session with the Midwestern Modern Language Association on May 7, at the University of Chicago. The chairman of the meeting was James C. Austin, Southern Illinois University at East St. Louis, and the papers were: Nicholas T. Joost, Southern Illinois University at Alton, "The Dial: A Journalistic Emblem and Its Tradition"; Howard R. Long, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, "Frank Luther Mott: Scholar, Teacher, Human Being"; Stuart Levine, University of Kansas, "Poe's Fiction in Context: The Magazine as Environment." Lyon T. Richardson, Western Reserve, chairman of the American Literature Group of MLA, provided concluding remarks.

MVHA. A joint session on "Literature and History: A Reciprocal Trade" was held at the Mississippi Valley Historical Association meeting at Kansas City, Missouri, April 22. John William Ward, Amherst College, was chairman, and the papers were: Alvin C. Kibel, Wesleyan University, "Culture and Literary Criticism," and Leo Marx, Amherst College, "Figurative Language and Historical Explanation." An audience of about 130 attended the session, which concluded with a particularly active discussion.'

IN BRIEF. A distinguished series of lectures on American Studies was presented at Western Reserve University, featuring Kenneth W. Cameron on Emerson, Walter Harding on Thoreau, Howard Vincent on Melville, Ernest Samuels on Henry Adams, Raven McDavid on H. L. Mencken, Lyon Richardson on James, Francis Lee Utley on Faulkner, Philip Young on Hemingway, and Joseph H. Friend on Salinger. . . . The English department of Seton Hall University will

hold its Seventh Annual colloquium on Saturday, October 30, 1965, on "Psychology in Literature: Its Uses and Abuses," and manuscripts for possible presentation are invited. Send them to Prof. Edward T. Byrnes, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey. . . . A social history of Boston, based on a computer analysis of occupational mobility, residential mobility and property mobility, is being written by Stephan A. Thernstrom, Harvard University, under a new kind of ACLS grant, designed to experiment with the use of computers as an aid to research in the humanities and social sciences. . . . Forty-one National Defense Education Act institutes for elementary and secondary school teachers are being conducted this summer in American colleges. . . . *The College Teaching of English*, eds. John C. Gerber, John H. Fisher and Curt Zimansky, will be published in 1965 by Appleton-Century-Crofts. Analytic of historical development, present condition and future possibilities of teaching English in college, the book was jointly sponsored by ASA, along with NCTE, MLA and CEA. . . . American Studies summer institutes are being held at the University of Delaware, Marshall W. Fishwick and Charles F. Montgomery, directors; The George Washington University, Robert W. Walker, director; and Simpson College, Donald A. Koch, director. . . .



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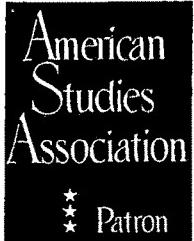
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AMERICAN CALENDAR Newsletter of the American Studies Association

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ALLEN GUTTMANN
Amherst College

From Brownson to Eliot: The Conservative Theory of Church and State

RELIGION, IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE THAT EXCLUDES SECULAR FAITHS, IS very high on the list of Conservative principles.¹ "We know, and, what is better, we feel inwardly," wrote Burke, "that religion is the basis of civil authority. . . . We know, and it is our pride to know, that man is by his constitution a religious animal. . . ."² Conservatives are certainly religious; religious men are not necessarily Conservative. In their refusal to face this fact, in their evasive references to "the spirit of religious veneration,"³ Russell Kirk and the modern disciples of Burke dodge problems their mentor met head on. Judaism and Christianity have prophetic traditions as well as priestly ones. There is in both faiths an inherent and theologically justified tendency to produce challengers as well as maintainers of order, levelers as well as defenders of hierarchy. It is not helpful to be told that "freedom is submission to the will of God" unless there is an institution authoritatively to interpret God's will.⁴ Unless such an institution exists, individuals are liable to strike

¹ *Conservative* refers in common speech to an attitude toward change: conservatives defend established institutions. The term also refers in the discourse of political theorists to the allegedly immutable principles formulated, chiefly by Burke, De Maistre and the nineteenth-century papacy, in response to the French Revolution. I shall refer only to the second form and distinguish it by the capital letter, e.g. Conservatism.

² *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Works (Boston, 1871), III, 350-51. On the necessity of religion in a Conservative society, see also Russell Kirk, *The Conservative Mind* (3rd ed.; Chicago, 1960), p. 7; Samuel P. Huntington, "Conservatism as an Ideology," *American Political Science Review*, LI (1957), 456; Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America* (2nd ed.; New York, 1962), p. 42.

³ Kirk, *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice* (Chicago, 1956), p. 13. See also Willmoore Kendall, *The Conservative Affirmation* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 145-46.

⁴ Belief in Original Sin, almost always part of the Conservative credo, is without political consequences, as shown by Maritain and Niebuhr in their logical movement from Original Sin to a democratic theory of politics. Original Sin leads to Conservative

out on their own in response to eccentric interpretations of Holy Writ or even in answer to "special revelations." Set aside the example of Oliver Cromwell; there are yet American radicals, from the days of Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams to those of Willard Uphaus and Martin Luther King, whose Christian commitments led them where no Conservative can follow.

Burke himself was very clear on the uselessness of "religion" without the proper institutional forms. Closely paraphrasing Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* (VIII, iii, 6), he insisted that "in a Christian commonwealth the Church and the State are one and the same thing, being different integral parts of the same whole."⁵ He wrote, in one of the most ardent sections of the *Reflections*, "He who gave our nature to be perfected by our virtue willed also the necessary means of its perfection: He willed, therefore, the State: He willed its connection with the source and original archetype of all perfection." The institutional form of this connection was, of course, the "Church Establishment" that Burke defended as "the first of our prejudices." Englishmen, he continued, "do not consider their Church establishment as convenient, but as essential to their state: not as a thing heterogeneous and separable—something added for accommodation. . . . They consider it as the foundation of their whole Constitution, with which, and with every part of which, it holds an indissoluble union. Church and State are ideas inseparable in their minds. . . ."⁶ The necessity of establishment was never doubted by Burke.⁷ It was never doubted by his great coadjutor on the continent, Joseph de Maistre:

The excellence and durability of great political institutions are proportionate to the closeness of the union of politics and religion within them. . . . There should be a state religion just as there is a state political system; or rather, religious and political dogmas, mingled and merged together, should form a *general or national mind* sufficiently strong to repress the aberrations of the individual reason which is, of its nature, the mortal enemy of any association whatever because it gives birth only to divergent opinions.⁸

theory only when one also believes (1) that some men are exempted by Grace or some other means from the effects of the Fall, and (2) that the exempted can be politically separated from the "unregenerate." But the separation must be institutionalized and the obvious means is the Church, which interprets the ineffable decisions of the Almighty and rejects the claims of the Martin Luthers and the Anne Hutchinsons.

⁵ "Speech on the Petition of the Unitarians," *Works*, VII, 48.

⁶ Pp. 361, 352, 362-63.

⁷ See Ernest Barker, *Essays on Government* (2nd ed.; London, 1951), pp. 224-27; Peter J. Stanlis, *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1957), pp. 195-230; Carl B. Cone, *Burke and the Nature of Politics* (Lexington, Ky., 1957-64), II, 285-88.

⁸ *Works*, ed. Jack Lively (New York, 1965), pp. 106, 108.

The necessity for establishment was certainly never doubted by Pope Leo XIII, the great nineteenth-century formulator of Catholic theory of Church and State.

American Conservatives loyal to Burkean ideals and American Catholics faithful to Leo's encyclicals have, however, been frustrated by the First Amendment to the Constitution and by the commitment of most Protestants and Jews to religious voluntarism.⁹ Since the early nineteenth-century disestablishments of the Congregational Church in New England, the trend has been away from the kind of church that Burke and Leo XIII, and Orestes Brownson and T. S. Eliot thought indispensable to a Conservative society menaced by the age of the democratic revolution. The extraordinary thing about the Conservative theory of Church and State is that it has been maintained by almost no one in America other than Orestes Brownson and an ever-smaller like-minded minority within his Church. Russell Kirk and his followers avoid this unpleasant (for them) problem as Perseus evaded Medusa's dreadful stare; the rest of us, if we care about political ideas, are required to take a look.

The Conservative position on Church and State received its first important statement, in the United States, not in the unsightly political squabbles over establishment in New England but in the essays of Orestes A. Brownson.¹⁰ And yet, despite much talk of a "Brownson revival," Americans have paid little attention to this body of thought. One expects Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. to write better of Brownson's early radicalism than of his subsequent Conservatism, but even Catholics have tended to emphasize the democratic in Brownson and to ignore the antidemocratic.¹¹

The *Boston Quarterly Review*, which Brownson edited, was at first a platform for Liberal democracy. "Our rights and duties," wrote Brownson, "belong to us as men. . . . If all men have equal rights and duties,

⁹ For a rather optimistic survey of the Protestant position, see Winthrop Hudson, *The Great Tradition of the American Churches* (New York, 1953).

¹⁰ The theory behind New-England establishment was already a long way from Burkean Conservatism. Timothy Dwight, for instance, insisted that "establishment" actually meant "The legal establishment of the public worship of God . . ." (*Travels in New-England* [New Haven, 1821-22], IV, 401). Under this system, none of the churches was, in relation to the state, authoritative.

¹¹ Schlesinger, *Orestes A. Brownson* (Boston, 1939); for typical essays, see Virgil Michel, "Brownson: Man of Men," *Catholic World*, CXXV (September 1927), 754-62; M. A. Fitzsimmons, "Brownson's Search for the Kingdom of God," *Review of Politics*, XVI (January 1954), 22-32; Paul Conroy, "The Role of the American Constitution in the Political Philosophy of Orestes A. Brownson," *Catholic Historical Review*, XXV (October 1939), 271-86. A significant exception is Kirk's introduction to a new collection, reprinted in *Beyond the Dreams of Avarice*, pp. 133-52, but even here Kirk slighted the Church-State problem.

. . . then is society bound to treat them as equals."¹² Like Emerson, Thoreau, Bancroft, and the Jacksonians of the *Democratic Review*, Brownson defended individual liberty against the power of the state: "Our danger is not from an excess of individualism, but from centralization. The danger to be apprehended is from the strength, not the weakness of government."¹³ Turning his attention to the problem of Church and State, Brownson—still a Unitarian—specifically rejected the argument that the United States was a Christian nation. He defended religious liberty in its most radical form: "If the Christian has the right, as a man, to defend his honest belief, the Deist, the Jew, the Atheist must have the same right." Laws compelling religious observances "are useless in the case of those who are religious, and can only produce hypocrisy in the case of those who are not."¹⁴ Ministers err if they consider Christianity as "a curb, a bit, a restraint, a means by which the people may be kept in order. . . ."¹⁵ In his often reprinted essay of 1840, "On the Labouring Classes," Brownson railed against "priestcraft" (by which he meant ministers of all churches): "The priest is universally a tyrant, universally the enslaver of his brethren, and therefore it is Christianity [which] condemns him."¹⁶

The Log-Cabin-and-Hard-Cider election of 1840 stunned Brownson and shocked him so badly that he soon abandoned his magazine and started down the road to Catholic Conservatism.

They who had devoted their lives to the cause of their country, of truth, justice, liberty, humanity, were looked upon as enemies of the people, and were unable to make themselves heard amid the maddened and maddening hurrahs of the drunken mob that went for 'Tippecanoe and Tyler too.'¹⁷

The people were obviously incompetent to govern themselves: "This notion of theirs about self-government is all moonshine. . . ."¹⁸ Brownson adopted a new slogan—"Liberty only in and through Order"¹⁹—and articulated a version of Conservatism importantly influenced by Joseph de Maistre.²⁰

¹² "Democracy," *Boston Quarterly Review* (hereafter BoQR), I (January 1838), 67.

¹³ "Slavery—Abolitionism," BoQR, I (April 1838), 257.

¹⁴ "Religion and Politics," BoQR, I (July 1838), 322, 332.

¹⁵ "Democracy and Christianity," BoQR, I (October 1838), 464.

¹⁶ BoQR, III (July 1840), 385. (The first of two parts.)

¹⁷ "Democracy and Liberty," *Democratic Review*, XII (April 1843), 374.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 382. ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 387.

²⁰ Brownson drew upon De Maistre's *Essay on the Generative Principle of Political Constitutions*, which he reviewed at length in the October 1847 issue of *Brownson's Quarterly Review*, for the distinction between the "providential" constitution given by a nation's history and the artificial constitutions drawn up by feckless philosophers.

We plant ourselves . . . on the firm reality of things, and content ourselves with gaining what can be gained with the means existing institutions furnish. We seek to advance religion through and in obedience to the State.²¹

John L. O'Sullivan, editor of the *Democratic Review*, appended a disclaimer to each of Brownson's contributions and quickly terminated the agreement that had made Brownson a partner in the magazine.

Undeterred by O'Sullivan's displeasure, Brownson began to investigate the origins of government in order to locate the sources of authority. True to Catholic theory, he dismissed the idea that authority derives ultimately, by social contract or by any other means, from the people. "All power," he wrote in 1843, "is of God, and in the last analysis, no government is legitimate that does not subsist by Divine Right."²² Brownson stressed this conviction in a subsequent essay:

The absolute and plenary sovereignty of God excludes all other sovereignty, and our absolute and unconditional subjection to him excludes all other subjection. Hence no liberty before God, and no subjection before man; and therefore liberty is rightly defined [as] full and entire freedom from all authority but the authority of God.²³

Positive legislation contrary to divinely established natural law is *ipso facto* the invalid legislation of an illegitimate authority. To believe otherwise is to make the State absolute: "Unless you exempt the state from all obligations even to the law of nature, you must make it amenable to the moral law as expounded by the Church, Divinely commissioned to teach and declare it."²⁴ When commanded by the State to violate natural law, the citizen must resist. Brownson answered the question asked of all theorists who make legitimacy the consequence of governmental adherence to natural law: who judges whether or not positive legislation is in accordance with natural law? Who decides whether or not resistance is justified? Brownson's answer was unequivocal: The Church decides; it belongs "to the Church . . . as the representative of the highest authority on earth, to determine when resistance is proper, and to prescribe its forms, and its extent. When this commands, it is our duty to obey."²⁵ (By "Church" Brownson meant, of course, the

21 "Democracy and Liberty," p. 386.

22 "Origin and Ground of Government," *Democratic Review*, XII (September 1843), 252.

23 "Authority and Liberty," *Brownson's Quarterly Review* (hereafter *BrQR*), N.S., III (April 1849), 150.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 156.

25 "Origin and Ground of Government," *Democratic Review*, XIII (October 1843), 374.

Roman Catholic Church into which he was accepted October 20, 1844.) Father Stanley J. Parry, himself an acknowledged Conservative, is quite good on this aspect of Brownson's thought. In order to avoid the anarchy of individual judgment and the tyranny implied in the majoritarian's cry of *Vox populi, vox dei*, Brownson had to see the Church as arbiter of disputes over the legitimacy of legislation. In Parry's words, Brownson

seeks a solution not in the . . . providential order of history, not in the appeal of a purer natural knowledge of God's intentions gained through abstract considerations, but rather . . . in a new and supernatural movement of the Divine into the order of history—in Christ, that is to say, projected through history in his Mystical Body, the Church.

This solution, continues Parry in truly Brownsonian phrases, "can be called authoritarian in the political sense only if one crudely thrusts upon [Brownson] a premise he never accepted: that the authority of the Church is a purely human authority."²⁶

For these reasons, Brownson urged the "unity of Church and State" and condemned as inane the Liberal theory of separation of spheres. Although the Church was necessary for the preservation of true liberty,²⁷ and ought logically to be established, Brownson recognized and made clear, especially in *The American Republic*, that legal establishment of Catholicism was both impractical and—in Brownson's optimistic view—unnecessary.

The religious mission of the United States is not . . . to establish the church by external law, or to protect her by legal disabilities, pains, and penalties against the sects, however uncatholic they may be; but to maintain catholic freedom, neither absorbing the state in the church nor the church in the state, but leaving each to move freely . . . in the sphere assigned it in the eternal order of things. Their mission separates church and state as external governing bodies, but unites them in the interior principles from which each derives its vitality and force. Their union is in the intrinsic unity of principle, and in the fact that . . . each obeys one and the same Divine law.²⁸

²⁶ "The Premises of Brownson's Political Theory," *Review of Politics*, XVI (April 1954), 209-10. Father Parry is one of the contributors to Frank S. Meyer's collection, *What Is Conservatism?* (New York, 1964). Another excellent article is A. Robert Caponigri, "Brownson and Emerson: Nature and History," *New England Quarterly*, XVIII (September 1945), 368-90.

²⁷ "Catholicity Necessary to Sustain Popular Liberty," *BrQR*, II (October 1845), 514-30; see also James Rowland, "Brownson and the American Republic Today," *Catholic World*, CLII (February 1841), 537-41.

²⁸ *The American Republic* (New York, 1866), p. 428.

Which one of them interprets and the other enforces. The American mission is, then, to "harmonize" Church and State until the entire continent forms "one grand nation, a really catholic nation, great, glorious, and free."²⁹

Although Brownson's arguments were derived from medieval thought long familiar to theologians, the American hierarchy was distinctly embarrassed by Brownson's outspoken and belligerent statement of Catholic political theory.³⁰ The hierarchy preferred to stress the compatibility of Catholicism and democracy. Henry J. Browne exaggerates only slightly when he summarizes the history of the Catholic position of Church and State:

The Catholic position as traditionally presented by theologians and canon lawyers holds that one true church is to be recognized and treated as such by the state. The American hierarchy, on the other hand, has constantly and consistently, from Carroll through Hughes and Gibbons up to Archbishop John McNicholas . . . of Cincinnati, and as late as 1948, expressed satisfaction with the American mode of separation, and evidenced no desire to change it, even should Catholics ever become an overwhelming majority of the population.³¹

The hierarchy's position was maintained *in spite of* the political encyclicals of Leo XIII. In order to understand the dilemma of the Church in America, one has to see just how far the American hierarchy departed from the Conservative traditions of the Church in their eager acceptance of the blessings of liberty.

The liberalization of American Catholicism, excellently studied by Robert D. Cross,³² began with the Carroll family of Maryland. The Carrolls provided one signer of the Declaration of Independence, one signer of the Constitution, and the first great leader of the American Church. John Carroll, consecrated Bishop of Baltimore in 1790, was enthusiastic about the American relationship of Church and State. In an often quoted letter to the *Columbian Magazine*, he wrote:

Thanks to genuine spirit and Christianity, the United States have banished intolerance from their system of government, and many of them have done justice to every denomination of Christians, which ought to be done to them in all, of placing them on the same footing of citizen-

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 429, 439.

³⁰ See, for example, Theodore Maynard, *Orestes Brownson* (New York, 1943), p. 233.

³¹ "Catholicism in the United States," in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. James Ward and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, 1961), p. 115.

³² *Liberal Catholicism in America* (Cambridge, 1958).

ship, and conferring an equal right of participation in national privileges. Freedom and independence, acquired by the united efforts, and cemented with the mingled blood of Protestant and Catholic fellow-citizens, should be equally enjoyed by all. . . .³³

Bishop Hughes of New York, Bishop Ireland of St. Paul, Bishop Spaulding of Peoria and other members of the American hierarchy echoed Carroll's sentiments, but the most eloquent defender of the American way was probably Cardinal Gibbons. In the *North American Review*, this most important of nineteenth-century American clerics wrote:

American Catholics rejoice in our separation of Church and State; and I can conceive of no combination of circumstances likely to arise which would make a union desirable either to Church or State. We know the blessings of our present arrangement; it gives us liberty and binds together priests and people in a union better than that of Church and State.³⁴

Liberals within the Church today quote such statements proudly and often; they do not very frequently quote those bishops who opposed the liberalism of Ireland and Gibbons. One hears little of Archbishop Corrigan of New York, Bishop McQuaid of Rochester and those clerics who rejoiced and felt themselves vindicated when Pius IX in 1864 specifically condemned the proposition that "The Church ought to be separated from the State and the State from the Church."³⁵ The fact of the matter is that Leo XIII, who followed Pius IX in 1878, formulated a Catholic theory of Church and State that was fundamentally incompatible with the American tradition of separation.

As Father John Courtney Murray and his supporters have patiently shown in a long series of scholarly books and articles, Leo XIII feared the anticlerical secularism of the European Liberal and did not fully understand the possibilities of a democratic society as it existed in the United States. But to understand the controversy within the Church, in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth, one must look briefly at Leo's response to the French Revolution and the revolutions that followed in its wake.

³³ See Anson Phelps Stokes, *Church and State in the United States* (New York, 1950), I, 330; John Tracy Ellis, *Perspectives in American Catholicism* (Baltimore, 1963), pp. 2-3. Ellis' chapter was also published in *Harper's*.

³⁴ "The Church and the Republic," *North American Review*, CLXXXIX (March 1909), 336.

³⁵ Number 55 in the *Syllabus of Errors*. Number 80 condemns the proposition that "The Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself and come to terms with progress, liberalism, and modern civilization."

In the encyclical *Diuturnum* (1881), the first of the letters on political theory, Leo restated the traditional Catholic view of political authority. Authority derives from God and is conditional in the sense that civil authority never has the right to command "anything which violates the law of nature or the will of God." Subsequent encyclicals, of which the seldom quoted *Immortale Dei* (1885) is the most important, made clear that the Church's role as judge of the legitimacy of authority necessitated the establishment of the Church. Because "Rulers must bear in mind that God is the paramount ruler of the world, and must set Him before themselves as their exemplar and law in the administration of the State," there must be an "orderly connection" between ecclesiastical and civil rulers. Separation of Church and State is, in principle, "wholly at variance with the truth." (In practice, Leo admitted that rulers had to preserve the peace of their realms and could not disturb the sanctions of custom. Separation was, in predominantly Protestant countries, an "article of peace.")

Immortale Dei was followed in 1888 by *Libertas Humana*, a forthright statement on religious liberty in a Catholic society:

Justice . . . forbids, and reason itself forbids, the State to be Godless; or to adopt a line of action which would end in Godlessness—namely, to treat the various religions . . . alike, and to bestow upon them promiscuously equal rights and privileges. Since, then, the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true. . . .

In 1895, Leo turned his attention to the Church in the United States. The letter *Longinqua Oceani* praises the American Church for its remarkable progress and American conditions for their contribution to that progress. Although the Church itself deserves the greater share of credit, "thanks are due to the equity of the laws which obtain in America and to the customs of the well-ordered Republic." Catholics anxious to refute the hysterical accusations of Paul Blanshard ignore the qualifications that follow this praise of American conditions:

Yet, though this be true, it would be very erroneous to draw the conclusion that in America is sought the type of the most desirable status of the Church, or that it would be universally lawful or expedient for State and Church to be, as in America, dissevered and divorced.

The Church would "bring forth more abundant fruits if, in addition to liberty, she enjoyed the favor of the laws and the patronage of the public authority."

Bishop Ireland was so upset by this statement that he cancelled an agreement to comment on the encyclical in the *North American Review*.

Cardinal Gibbons, who was directly rebuked by Leo during the "Americanism" dispute of 1899,³⁶ learned to preface his praises of American life with the (seldom quoted) acknowledgment that "the most desirable relation" of Church and State in a predominantly Catholic country was "friendly union and co-operation."³⁷ But it was obvious to any reader or listener that Gibbons was far more enthusiastic about the practical than about the "ideal" arrangement.

The dispute within the Church, which reached one climax in the 1890s, has apparently reached another in the two decades since World War II. Father Francis J. Connell, one of the leaders of the Conservative wing of the Church, has consistently maintained that the twentieth-century pontiffs have been faithful to Leo's legacy and that the American Church cannot but heed their teachings. In one bellicose essay he quoted Pius XI's *Quas Primas* (1925) on the superiority of the ecclesiastical to the civil authority: "He would grievously err who would deny to Christ the government of all civil matters, since He receives from the Father the most absolute right over created things. . ." Connell quoted Leo's *Immortale Dei* in his advocacy of governmental support of the only true Church, and he concluded, "We must unhesitatingly proclaim that the state cannot attain its destiny save through Christ the King. . ."³⁸ The major challenge to this attempt to apply traditional doctrines to the contemporary situation has come from Father John Courtney Murray, who gradually developed in *Theological Studies* the argument that much of Catholic doctrine on politics is historically contingent and, for that reason, no longer relevant. Going back to Gelasius, Bellarmine and John of Paris, Father Murray demonstrated that Leo's doctrine was applicable to the paternalistic society of the medieval period (and the nineteenth century in Europe) but inapplicable to the democratic societies of nineteenth-century America and twentieth-century Europe. Freedom of religion in a lay state was an "article of peace" that ought now become an "article of faith." Freedom of religion, in the ordinary rather than in the traditional Catholic sense, was not a necessary evil but a positive good.³⁹

³⁶ See *Testem Benevolentiae* (1899). A great controversy has grown up around this letter addressed to Gibbons about a heresy, in France, traced to American statements of doubtful orthodoxy attributed to Father Isaac Hecker. The standard study is Thomas McAvoy, *The Great Crisis in American Catholic History* (Chicago, 1957).

³⁷ "The Church and the Republic," pp. 335-36.

³⁸ "Christ the King of Civil Rulers," *American Ecclesiastical Review* (hereafter *AER*), CXIX (October 1948), 245, 252.

³⁹ An excellent summary and expansion of Murray's position can be found in Richard Regan, S.J., *American Pluralism and the Catholic Conscience* (New York, 1963), pp. 38-71.

Father Murray was quickly engaged in debate by Father George W. Shea, who asserted that nothing had happened to change the truth of Leo's *Immortale Dei*.⁴⁰ Murray replied to Shea and was in turn sharply attacked by Father Joseph Fenton. The Church, growled Fenton, does not teach us to "understress any section of Catholic doctrine, simply because it happens to be unfashionable, or happens to be abused by anti-Catholic agitators at the time."⁴¹ Even as Victor Yanitelli tried to chronicle the controversy, Fathers Murray and Connell continued to cut and slash their way through the pages of the *American Ecclesiastical Review*.⁴² By the end of 1953, the Vatican itself was deeply involved. Alfredo Cardinal Ottaviani, Conservative Pro-Secretary of the Congregation of the Holy Office, quoted Father Murray (whom he did not name) and informed the liberals that *Immortale Dei* was still an authoritative document on Church and State.⁴³ Although Pius XII himself followed Ottaviani with milder statements, Father Murray was ordered by his Jesuit superiors to halt publication of his inflammatory theses on religious liberty.

The battle was lost but not the war. While Conservatives published their articles in theological journals read only by other clergy and often obtainable only at libraries of Catholic colleges, Fathers John Tracy Ellis, John Courtney Murray, Walter J. Ong and Gustave Weigel have established themselves nationally as spokesmen respectfully attended by Protestants, Jews and secularists as well as Catholics. The liberals have on their side Jacques Maritain and Yves Simon, two internationally respected philosophers of Catholic democracy. The liberals have on their side a whole new generation of young historians, of whom Michael Novak and Daniel Callahan are representative, historians who rejoice in the end of the "Constantinian Era" and in the prospects of a free Church in an open society.

The liberals have on their side the first generation of sophisticated novelists to remain in the Church.⁴⁴ They can point now, not only to the familiar anti-Catholicism of Julian Moynihan's *Brothers and Sisters*,

⁴⁰ "Catholic Doctrine and 'The Religion of the State,'" *AER*, CXXIII (September 1950), 161-74.

⁴¹ "The Status of a Controversy," *AER*, CXXIV (June 1951), 458.

⁴² Yanitelli, "Chronicle: A Church State Controversy," *Thought*, XXVI (Autumn 1951), 443-51; Connell, "The Theory of the 'Lay State,'" *AER*, CXXV (July 1951), 7-18; Murray, "For the Freedom and Transcendence of the Church," *AER*, CXXVI (January 1952), 28-48; Connell, "Reply to Father Murray," *AER*, CXXVI (January 1952), 49-59. Etc.

⁴³ "Church and State," *AER*, CXXVIII (May 1953), 321-34.

⁴⁴ American Catholicism, contrary to the usual allegations, has produced its share of first-rate writers. But Dreiser, Fitzgerald, O'Neill, O'Hara, Farrell and McCarthy—to name a handful—are scarcely to be considered as Catholic writers.

but also to the critical Catholicism of Harry Sylvester's *Moon Gaffney* (a remarkably powerful attack on Catholic Conservatism and a remarkably bold affirmation of Catholic anarchism as found in the Catholic Worker movement), to J. F. Powers' brilliant comedy, *Morte D'Urban* (a wildly funny account of a clerical operator who needles the liberals and bludgeons the Conservatives), to William Michelfelder's *Be Not Angry* (an indictment of the "quicksands of rectory intrigue" and of the conspiratorial witlessness of Catholic-Action anticomunism—and a defense of the clergy's humanity and of the redemptive love that conquers all, even the creeds of the Church).

The liberals have on their side *America*, *Commonweal* and *Ramparts*—and the Vatican. The most important change in the Church (as opposed to the Church in the United States) has been the change from Pius XII to John XXIII and Paul VI. Father Murray, silenced under Pius XII, was, at the Ecumenical Council of 1963, one of the chief actors in the drama that brought forth the draft statement on religious liberty. It seems likely that the American liberals will have behind them what the Conservatives had in the nineteenth century—the authority of the Holy See. It is now at least possible that the American arrangement will supersede the Spanish and the Portuguese as the ideal. Historians, political scientists and sociologists can still point to a very high incidence of undemocratic attitudes and illiberal behavior among American Catholics; bigots are a hardy lot and will probably press their claims even in Utopia. But the signs of the times seem to point toward a further democratization of Catholic theory and practice.⁴⁵ The bases on which to construct a Conservative society continue to erode.

Although American Catholicism in the twentieth century has produced no Conservative spokesman to equal Orestes Brownson, America has produced a major figure to speak for the Conservative tradition of Church and State: T. S. Eliot, whom Russell Kirk correctly describes as a true successor to Burke and Coleridge. (The third edition of Kirk's *Conservative Mind* is subtitled *From Burke to Eliot*.) Like Brownson, Eliot passed through Unitarianism and perhaps even agnosticism on his way to orthodoxy—in Eliot's case, the orthodoxy of Anglo-Catholicism.

In his early poetry, especially in *The Waste Land* (1922), Eliot con-

⁴⁵ Although Federal aid to *all* religions violates the spirit of the First Amendment, at least as Madison understood it, it does not establish any religion or give any Church any legal advantage over any other. Such aid is clearly compatible with democratic theory, especially if secular humanism is accepted as the fourth great faith (in which case public education in its avoidance of "religion" is implicit advocacy of the religion of secular humanism).

trasted the fragmented and faithless modern world with the wholeness of earlier and allegedly happier times. Although irony qualifies almost every statement, the purposeless carnality of "the young man carbuncular" and the bored and tired typist seems distinctly inferior to the love celebrated in Spenser's poetry and Dante's. Echoes from the earlier poets sound through *The Waste Land* and make contrast inevitable. Eliot sets Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra, and St. Augustine's St. Augustine, off against

Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants
C.i.f. London: documents in sight
Asked me in demotic French
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.⁴⁶

Eliot pointed, in the early poems, to a world peopled by hollow men and by homeless men:

My house is a decayed house,
And the jew squats on the window sill, the owner
Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled in London.⁴⁷

Even as Eliot displayed the shards of modern civilization, he began to develop a theory of literature compatible with Conservatism. In his most famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), Eliot deprecated the individualism which is the very center of Liberalism. The poet must "develop or procure the consciousness of the past"; he must extinguish his own personality: "What happens is a continual surrender of himself as he is at the moment to something which is more valuable. The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality."⁴⁸ Literary tradition had, for Eliot, almost the prescriptive force the past has in Burke's philosophy. Technical innovation was justified because it enabled the poet better to preserve what seemed the very basis of civilization—Christianity.

In the decade that followed the publication of "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot moved toward the explicit affirmation of Christianity in his poetry, toward "Ash-Wednesday," *Murder in the Cathedral* and the first of the *Four Quartets* ("Burnt Norton"). In this same decade, Eliot realized that literary criticism was too narrow a field

⁴⁶ *Complete Poems and Plays* (New York, 1952), p. 43.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21. (The poem is "Gerontion.")

⁴⁸ *Selected Essays* (2nd American ed.; New York, 1950), pp. 6-7.

within which to work. "Literary criticism," he wrote, "should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint."⁴⁹ His own standpoint was soon obvious. He announced himself, in the famous preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1929), "classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion."⁵⁰ In addition to essays on Anglican clergymen (Lancelot Andrewes, John Bramhall), the book contained "Niccolo Machiavelli," in which Eliot quoted the Italian on the social uses of an established church. In his cautious way, Eliot suggested agreement:

It is quite possible that an established National Church, such as the Church of England, might have seemed to Machiavelli the best establishment for a Christian commonwealth; but that a religious establishment of some kind is necessary to a nation he is quite sure.⁵¹

In the Norton Lectures delivered at Harvard in 1932-33, Eliot dropped a remark, which he did not expand upon, that hints at the Conservative trend of his thoughts on Church and State: "To my mind, Racine's *Bérénice* represents about the summit of civilization in tragedy; and it is, in a way, a Christian tragedy, with devotion to the State substituted for devotion to divine law."⁵² This substitution of Church for State is not an operation that anyone outside the Conservative tradition is likely to make.

Eliot turned in 1933, in his Page-Barbour lectures at the University of Virginia, to a detailed castigation of the strange gods of modern heresy. He had already, in his journal *Criterion*, warmly commended *I'll Take My Stand* (1930), the famous manifesto by twelve unreconstructed Southerners determined to defend their region against the urban, industrial, democratic, expansive society of the North.⁵³ In his lectures, Eliot hotly attacked modern civilization as "worm-eaten with Liberalism" and repeated his commendation of the twelve Southerners. He added another support to his Conservative stucture—religious homogeneity.

The population [of a desirable society] should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to

⁴⁹ "Religion and Literature," *Selected Essays*, p. 343.

⁵⁰ *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (Garden City, N. Y., 1929), p. vii.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵² *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (London, 1933), pp. 41-42. It is no surprise that Eliot in this book defended Catholic and Communist censorships as correct in principle, p. 136 n.

⁵³ "A Commentary," *Criterion*, X (April 1931), 481-90. John Crowe Ransom's contribution to the collection lauded both the English Establishment and the Southern Establishment before the Civil War.

be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race [sic] and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable. There must be a proper balance between urban and rural, industrial and agricultural development. And a spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated.⁵⁴

In his denunciation of the heretical D. H. Lawrence, Eliot slyly quoted from Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors* (which he did not identify): "That we can and ought to reconcile ourselves to Liberalism, Progress and Modern Civilization is a proposition which we need not have waited for Lawrence to condemn; and it matters a good deal in what name we condemn it."⁵⁵ It matters, that is, that we condemn modern civilization in the name of Anglo-Catholicism rather than in the name of the Pope of Rome or, much worse, D. H. Lawrence's idiosyncratic version of Fascism.⁵⁶

It was, however, Roman Catholicism toward which Eliot had moved in his consideration of the problem of Church and State. In *After Strange Gods*, he cited with approval Christopher Dawson, the most influential philosopher among English Catholic Conservatives in the 1930s. In several of the essays that appeared in *Criterion*, Eliot cited, again with approval, Joseph De Maistre (who had seldom been referred to by Americans since Orestes Brownson's laudatory references). Eliot chastized Sir Charles Petrie because his book in praise of monarchy lacked references to De Maistre and failed, therefore, fully to grasp the priority of ecclesiastical to civil authority. "Surely," complained Eliot, "the royalist can admit only one higher authority than the Throne, which is the Church."⁵⁷

At the very time that Eliot wrote this rebuke of Petrie, he was busy with a literary statement of De Maistre's principle of papal supremacy—or, at least, with the argument that the Church represents an authority higher than the State. *Murder in the Cathedral*, his first and best play, vividly dramatizes the martyrdom, in 1170, of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury. Becket had acted as King Henry's chancellor. Now, in opposition to the secular authority, he rejects the temptation of temporal power:

No! shall I, who keep the keys
Of heaven and hell, supreme alone in England,

⁵⁴ *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* (New York, 1934), p. 20.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁵⁶ On Lawrence, see my essay, "D. H. Lawrence: The Politics of Irrationality," *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature*, V (Summer 1964), 151-68.

⁵⁷ "A Commentary," *Criterion*, XIII (July 1934), 629.

Who bind and loose, with power from the Pope,
 Descend to a punier power?
 Delegate to deal the doom of damnation,
 To condemn kings, not serve among their servants
 Is my open office. . . .⁵⁸

When King Henry's knights come with threats of death, Thomas is adamant:

It is not I who insult the King,
 And there is a higher than I or the King,
 It is not I, Becket from Cheapside,
 It is not against me, Becket, that you strive.
 It is not Becket who pronounces doom,
 But the law of Christ's Church, the judgment of Rome.⁵⁹

In a scene that Eliot never equalled for dramatic intensity, Thomas is assassinated by the drunken knights (who then stand about Becket in a circle, with swords pointed at the corpse, in physical enactment of Eliot's favorite image of the turning wheel and its still center). The knights attempt then anachronistically to rationalize their deed with the sophistries of twentieth-century secularism. (The anachronism shocks the spectator into the realization that the whole meaning of the play is as relevant to the present as the completely contemporary language of the rationalizations.) The play ends with a long chorus, the last lines of which are these:

Lord, have mercy on us.
 Christ, have mercy on us.
 Lord, have mercy on us.
 Blessed Thomas, pray for us.⁶⁰

The Idea of a Christian Society, three lectures given at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, completed the basic design. Although Eliot recognized that no society of our day can properly be termed "Christian," he feared—as he often repeated—that a civilization totally estranged from Christianity is impossible. One step toward a Christian society was surely the definition of the *idea* of one.

It is not necessary that all men be saints:

The relation of the Christian State, the Christian Community, and the Community of Christians, may be looked at in connexion with the problem of *belief*. Among the men of state, you would have as a minimum, conscious conformity of behavior. In the Christian Com-

⁵⁸ *Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 187.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 206.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

munity that they ruled, the Christian faith would be ingrained, but it requires, as a minimum, only a largely unconscious behavior; and it is only from the much smaller number of conscious human beings, the Community of Christians, that one would expect a conscious Christian life on its highest social level.⁶¹

The "lay state" of the secularists, and of such liberal Catholics as Father Murray, is rejected. The Christian organization of society is all but impossible without an established Church. A "National Church" that forgets its connection with the "Universal Church" can be a great evil; nonetheless, the evils of disestablishment are greater. "I am convinced that you cannot have a national Christian society, a religious-social community, a society with a political philosophy founded upon the Christian faith, if it is constituted as a mere congeries of private and independent sects. The national faith must have an official recognition by the State, as well as an accepted status in the community and a basis of conviction in the heart of the individual."⁶² The Church and State together will see to it that "the dissentients . . . remain marginal, tending to make only marginal contributions."⁶³ Although *Notes toward a Definition of Culture* (1949) adds sociological details to Eliot's ideal of a class-oriented society, the lectures of 1939 are the culmination of his theory of Church and State. To this body of literature Conservatives may turn.

To this body of literature Russell Kirk does, indeed, urge Conservatives to turn.⁶⁴ Of a tradition that has been driven from politics into literature as a routed army is pushed from the battlefield into its citadel,⁶⁵ Kirk writes: "In the sixth decade of the twentieth century, liberalism and socialism lie intellectually bankrupt, and for the most part fallen from favor. If Conservatively inclined men of affairs can rise to the summons of the poets, the norms of culture and politics may endure in defiance of the crimes and follies of the age."⁶⁶ Since Kirk wrote these brave words, the American people have elected a Catholic president whose interpretation of the proper relation of Church and State would have driven Orestes Brownson and Leo XIII into a suicide pact. Since Kirk wrote, Americans have had to choose between a self-styled "liberal" ready to wheel-and-deal his way toward an American form of social democracy politely labeled "modern liberalism" and a self-styled

⁶¹ *The Idea of a Christian Society* (New York, 1940), p. 27.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶⁴ Not sanguinely. See *Confessions of a Bohemian Tory* (New York, 1963), p. 217.

⁶⁵ For an excellent essay on the largely literary basis of the "New Conservatism," see Phillip Chapman, "The New Conservatism," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXV (March 1960), 17-34.

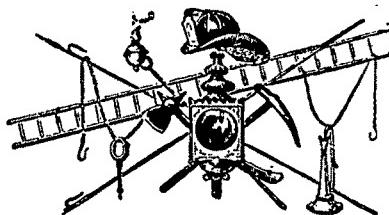
⁶⁶ *The Conservative Mind*, pp. 551-52.

"conservative" dedicated to nineteenth-century Liberal economics. The people chose the former, and it seems safe to guess that Barry Goldwater, had he campaigned as a true Conservative in the tradition of Burke, would have finished among the vegetarians. Since Kirk wrote, the Ecumenical Council has moved slowly but (one hopes) surely toward the solemn affirmation of positions anathema to Pius IX and Leo XIII. Since Kirk wrote, Clinton Rossiter has reiterated a judgment with which it is hard to disagree:

Those Americans who speak and write as genuine, self-conscious Conservatives are today, as they have been for more than a century, an eccentric minority in the world of ideas, a misunderstood minority [even] in the world of right-wing politics.⁶⁷

It is perhaps a measure of the decline of American Conservatism that the only major twentieth-century champion of its theory of Church and State departed from these shores in order to become a British subject. In "East Coker," the second of the *Four Quartets*, Eliot wrote of his family's origins: "Home is where one starts from." But home was England and not America. Eliot is buried now at East Coker, in the place from which his seventeenth-century ancestors set forth for the new world. His career is an emblem of the estrangement of American Conservatism from the predominantly secular and increasingly democratic course of the American Republic.

⁶⁷ *Conservatism in America*, p. 234.



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Autobiography and the American Myth

LIKE ALL OF OUR IMAGINATIVE WRITERS, AMERICAN AUTOBIOGRAPHERS HAVE traditionally drawn their materials from the fund of metaphors which grow out of our shared experiences, assumptions and beliefs—the American myth. The main difference between American autobiographers and writers of fiction is that the autobiographers have employed these metaphors in self-scrutiny and self-portrayal rather than in the presentation of fictional characters, but the resulting creation lends itself to cultural analysis as readily as purely fictional characters do. The created character in both cases represents values that are recognized by the reading audience at large. A consideration of several American autobiographers as cultural types may provide some new ways of viewing this special genre in our literature and suggest that autobiography in general is, in Georg Misch's words, "not only a special kind of literature but also an instrument of knowledge."¹ By regarding the creation of autobiographical character in America as a cultural act, we may suggest some of the ways in which Americans shape their views of themselves by attending closely to the dominant patterns of our culture. In addition, by noting the similarities between the fictional and autobiographical processes, we may offer an explanation of the striking coalition which these two genres have formed in our own time.

Before going on to examine specific cases, we should understand what we mean by "autobiography" and by "the American myth." We must recognize, first of all, that the term "autobiography" implies only that the author is writing specifically about himself; it has nothing to do with factual truth. Autobiography does not communicate raw experience, for

¹ *A History of Autobiography in Antiquity* (2 vols.: Cambridge, 1951), I, 10.

that is uncommunicable. It presents, rather, a metaphor for the raw experience. The language of autobiography stands in symbolic relation to both author and subject. As an author translates his life into language he creates for himself a symbolic identity and sees himself through the focusing glass of language. Since the language of the autobiographer is the common possession of his culture, it is not only subject to his personal manipulation, but it is filled with the assumed values of his society. The act of writing about oneself brings together the personal, unassimilated experiences of the writer and the shared values of his culture. The act of recollection becomes an act of creation and an act of self-evaluation at the same time.

When a man writes his autobiography he translates a unique view of himself into the language of his culture, subjecting some part of his private self to public evaluation. In doing so, he creates a fictive character who undergoes adventures drawn from the author's memory and a narrative persona who reports these experiences and evaluates them according to their place in the cultural pattern. The narrative persona stands between the created character and the body of cultural value that the author recognizes and describes an evaluative relationship between the two. Any autobiography, then, may be described according to the attitude of the narrative persona toward the behavior of the created character, in relation to the evaluated beliefs of the society as the author sees them. As Georg Misch puts it, "The spirit brooding over the recollected material is the truest and most real element in autobiography."²

As for the meaning of "the American myth," it is almost impossible to talk about *the* myth of any culture, since cultural values will undergo continual change as long as individuals have experiences and translate them into social belief. Even when communal assumptions take the form of a concrete story, that tale must remain sufficiently flexible and suggestive to allow for repeated interpretation. When it can no longer be reinterpreted to depict contemporary belief and to explain present problems it must fall into disuse and interest only the antiquarian. It is doubly difficult, furthermore, to define the myth of a democratic society such as ours, which at least purports to allow free competition among its individuals and its institutions for the allegiance of the people. In the United States, institutions rise to power and fall into impotence, and each describes national or cultural value in its own voice and its own terms. For the very reason that no single institution ever enjoys complete power, however, our cultural beliefs must be larger than their formulation by any one voice.

² *Ibid.*

The more or less orderly shift in dominant institutions in America suggests that the entire process occurs within a single system of values, which, compared to the forms it takes at different times, remains relatively constant. Social change in the United States is never more than apparently radical, it seems. An abiding and slowly shifting cultural pattern bridges all gaps and softens all shocks, no matter how deep or severe. Each new aspirant to social dominion must capitalize on values already a part of the tradition, even though he may intend to change them once he is in power. Indeed, the necessity to subscribe to these traditions at the outset limits his ability to change them in the long run. Our broadest values and traditions, then, either remain intact through all subsidiary change, or they alter so gradually that their movement may be charted and explained. Dissidence and competition do not deny the existence or power of a cultural myth; on the contrary, they serve to define it.

The American myth, in its most general form, describes human history as a pilgrimage from imperfection to perfection; from a dimly remembered union with the Divine to a re-establishment of that union. Within these very broad outlines, Americans have continually reinterpreted the several terms of the myth. For the Puritans, imperfection meant the natural depravity of human nature as exemplified by Adam; perfection referred to ultimate salvation through God's grace. For the Rationalists of our eighteenth century, the two terms meant, respectively, intellectual backwardness and worldly happiness through reason. For the Transcendentalists, they meant separation from and union with the spirit that is alive in Nature. For some later nineteenth-century reformers they denoted predatory individualism and collective Utopian harmony. For all of these groups the two terms were absolutely inseparable from the belief in America as a moral idea.

Whatever the particular form in which the myth has presented itself, it remains, as Charles Sanford has shown,³ an adaptation of Christian mythology to the particular problems of American life, for which it has been both a source and a means of solution. As a Christian myth, it has concerned itself mainly with reconciling human life with divine law; as an American myth it has combined, and often confused, the religious ideas of sin and atonement with the political issues of democracy. Just as the religious life attends to the task of reconciling the finite many with the infinite one, the political life works to reconcile the particular individual with the general group.

³ *The Quest for Paradise: Europe and the American Moral Imagination* (Urbana, Ill., 1961), esp. chaps. i-v.

Like all myths, this one directs individual energies toward a common goal, by evaluating forms of behavior, delineating appropriate roles, and making it generally possible for individuals to relate their lives to a larger pattern of value and purpose, to transcend their existential limitations and to extend beyond their proper selves their sphere of influence. Acts are evaluated in this case primarily according to how well they contribute to "progress," however that term is defined at any time. The primary roles described by the myth, similarly, arise out of this notion of progress. They receive their specific lineaments from previous objectifications of the myth, in sacred scripture and in secular literature. Every myth has its heroes and its villains, its victors and its victims.

This function of myth is particularly important for our purposes, since in autobiography the writer explains his life by depicting himself according to culturally evaluated images of character. As he turns his private experiences into language he assumes one of the many identities outlined in the myth and so asserts his connection with his culture. Given the millennial cast and the pervading futuristic spirit of the myth, we are not surprised to find the main character types to be the Prophets (those who interpret the complex relationship between present and future), the Heroes (those who successfully enact the prophecies), the Villains (those who throw up obstacles to fulfillment) and the Outcasts (those who fail to make a place for themselves in the great cultural program). There are, in short, a whole range of stances available to autobiographers, whether they choose to affirm the values stated in the myth or to deny the "truth" of the myth and define themselves by an act of negation. A very brief look at some characteristic American autobiographers in the act of portraying themselves should serve to illustrate a few of the available stances and some of the specific images and ideas that the myth has encompassed as it has influenced the lives of individual Americans.

Properly enough, the first man to relate his personal experience to the American myth was Columbus, who by grounding Christian prophecy in the New World soil became our first Prophet. "God made me the messenger of the new heaven and the new earth," he said, "of which He spoke in the Apocalypse by St. John, after having spoken of it by the mouth of Isaiah; and He showed me the spot where to find it."⁴ Columbus learned to see himself as a Prophet—spiritually descended from Isaiah and John—after absorbing the Medieval and Renaissance

⁴ *Four Voyages to the New World: Letters and Selected Documents*, trans. and ed. R. H. Major (New York, 1961), p. 148.

mythology of the western paradise.⁵ Considered as a part of European intellectual history, this self-image has wide and complex significances; considered as a part of American mythology, it is a crude beginning. Five centuries of American life have carried the myth in many directions from this starting point. Yet, this short passage marks the first autobiography to explain the life of the writer by relating it to a body of belief which may be called American.

The right to connect personal experience with great destinies is not vouchsafed to discoverers of continents alone. The true Prophet must work constantly to find a place in history for *all* his acts. His job, after all, is to teach the faithful how they may make their lives part of the great program, and he learns from his own life the wisdom he gives them. Cotton Mather judged all things according to their place in the divine plan. In the following passage from his diary he attempts to elevate the meanest concerns to that high degree of significance he elsewhere assigned to the New England settlements.

There are with me, in common with all the Children of Men, the usual Evacuations of Nature, to be daily attended. I would not only improve the Time which these call for, to form some Thoughts of Piety, wherein I may differ from the Brutes, (which in the Actions themselves I do vary little) and this I have usually already done; but I would now more particularly study that the Thoughts I form on these Occasions, may be of some abasing Tendency. The Actions themselves carry Humiliations in them; and a Christian ought always to think humble of himself, and be full of self-abasing and self-abhorring Reflections. By loathing of himself continually, and being very sensible of what are his own loathsome Circumstances, a Christian does what is very pleasing to Heaven. My Life (above any Man's) ought to be filled with such Things: and now I contrive certain Spotts of Time, in which I shall be by Nature itself invited unto them.⁶

This hierophantic voice descends from Augustine by way of Luther, proclaiming, as it does, that human nature impedes the progress of divine history and delays the journey to the Heavenly City.

A more sanguine Prophet, Walt Whitman, indicates how humanized the divine plan had become in a century and a half. Celebrating his transcendent self, he wrote:

I do not press my fingers across my mouth,
I keep as delicate around the bowels as around the head and heart,

⁵ See Sanford, chap. iv.

⁶ *The Diary*, "Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society" (2 vols.; Boston, 1911), I, 357.

Copulation is not more rank to me than death is.

I believe in the flesh and the appetites,
Seeing, hearing, feeling, are miracles, and each part and tag of me is
a miracle.⁷

Even while these vaunts mark an important change in the American self-image since Edward Taylor wrote the humbly supplicatory *Sacramental Meditations*, the prophetic aim—to define the mythic significance of daily activity—has not altered. A century after Whitman, we detect the same tone in Norman Mailer: "A phallic narcissist she called me. Well, I was phallic enough, a Village stickman who could muster on the head of his will enough of the divine It to call forth more than one becoming out of the womb of feminine Time."⁸ Mather debased himself in order to be exalted; Whitman sought to exalt the base; Mailer seems to enjoy debasing the exalted. All three saw that men must discover some way to align secular life with a fundamentally religious idea of destiny.

Because these passages illustrate so clearly how an individual may assimilate mythical themes in forming his autobiographical personality, they may seem to be extreme cases. When we compare these self-portraits to those of such beloved culture-heroes as Thomas Paine and Theodore Roosevelt, however, we see that Americans often employ rather crude, although effective, metaphors in defining themselves and their world. What is more, these men display considerably more sophistication in distinguishing rhetorical metaphor from observable fact than do men like James J. Strang, who was king of the Mormon settlement at Beaver Island; Lorenzo Dow, the great revivalist; and John Humphrey Noyes, founder of the Utopian colony at Oneida. These men were as little able to separate metaphor from fact as were Coronado and the seekers for the Seven Cities of Cibola. Noyes, for instance, recounting past prophecy, present torment and future hope, shows how absolutely he identified American expectation with the Biblical images which had conventionally expressed it. "Between the present time and the establishment of God's kingdom over the earth," he said, "lies a chaos of confusion, tribulation and war such as must attend the destruction of the fashion of the world and the introduction of the will of God as it is done in heaven. God has set me to cast up a highway across this chaos, and I am gathering out the stones and grading the track as fast as possible."⁹

⁷ "Song of Myself," in *Walt Whitman, Representative Selections* rev. ed. Floyd Stovall, "The American Writers Series" (New York, 1961), pp. 26-27 (11. 519-23).

⁸ *Advertisements for Myself* (New York, 1959), p. 496.

⁹ G. Wallingford Noyes, *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes* (New York, 1923), p. 308. Columbus never considered it irrational to look in the Western Hemisphere for the Earthly Paradise of Christian mythology. In his letter from the

Similarly possessed by the myth was Bronson Alcott. Instead of looking for a material enactment of spiritual prophecy, however, he propelled himself entirely into the world of spirit and passed off the physical world as a snare and an imperfect delusion. He was possessed by a millennial strain in American mythology which traces its ancestry back through Protestant history to the Gnostics and the Pelagians, and forward to Mary Baker Eddy. In the never-never land of his imaginings, evidences of imperfection and trouble passed away, and all his hopes became imminent possibilities. Walking in his garden on the Fourth of July 1846, he mused on the meaning of true freedom:

I cast my silent vote for the emancipation of the human soul, amidst the plants I love. The aroma of the buckwheat, eloquently humming with the winged freemen of the hives, disturbed now and then by the gunner's crack aiming death to the joyous songsters of the air and groves. They ventured not, these monstrous boys, into my coppice of protecting boughs, not into my peaceful glebes. Ah me! War rages near me, and the fields of this my Concord are beleaguered round with armed ruffians. Happy for myself if I am as yet a freeman, and a soul at peace . . . Alone in my benefice, why should I not rejoice in that freeness that cheapens all conventions, and makes me, in thought if not in deed, independent of the States and times, an honest and upright man in the midst of my age.¹⁰

The more obsessed of these prophetic figures usually undergo a violent self-transformation of some sort. This experience creates the intensified self-consciousness which prompts them to write autobiography in the first place, and it usually appears in the narrative itself as a "calling." The subject may feel himself wrenched out of an unsatisfactory, commonplace or misguided existence and swept up in the rush of divine history, as do so many of the converts who described their experiences in our great revival movements. One of these, an obscure and uncommonly endearing zealot from Kentucky named John Hinkle, explains that, after several uncertain inklings that God wanted him to give up farming and become a preacher, he went through long torment ("The flames of hell pierced my mouth and nose"), then transfiguration: "I fell

New World written during his third voyage, he said, regarding a river he had seen, "I hold that if this river does not issue from the Earthly Paradise, it must come from an immense country that lies to the S., of which there has been no knowledge until now: but I am well assured in my own mind that there, where I have declared, lies the Earthly Paradise, and I rest my opinion on the arguments and authorities which I have given above." *Narratives of the Discovery of America*, eds. A. W. Lawrence and Jean Young (New York, 1931), p. 300.

¹⁰ *The Journals of Bronson Alcott*, ed. Odell Shepherd (Boston, 1938), p. 183.

asleep for a short time and when I awoke I was happier than I ever was in all my life. All my troubles were gone, and I felt as helpless as a little child; did not think I could move my hands or feet, but soon I moved, and saw that I had physical strength . . . I felt that I never would commit another sin and that I could soar in the air shouting and praising God for the great love He had made manifest to me. I think that was January 1, 1886."¹¹ Elder Hinkle, as he calls himself, also shows how the autobiography of the assumed stems from the experience of assumption, when he says in his first sentence, "I have had a desire to tell the dealings of the Lord with me."¹²

Political callings may dictate a similarly religious expression, particularly when the assumed one's party embodies the utopian or millennial aspirations peculiar to religious prophecy. John Reed's metamorphosis from aristocrat to proletarian follows the pattern and employs the language of religious conversion at times, as does this account of Emma Goldman's response to the death of the Chicago anarchists:

I was in a stupor; a feeling of numbness came over me, something too horrible even for tears . . . I was entirely absorbed in what I felt was my own loss . . . I was put to bed, and soon I fell into a deep sleep. The next morning I awoke as from a long illness, but free from the numbness and the depression of the final shock. I had a distinct sensation that something new and wonderful had been born in my soul. A great ideal, a burning faith, a determination to dedicate myself to the memory of my martyred comrades, to make their cause my own, to make known to the world their beautiful lives and heroic deaths.¹³

Once again, we seem to be concerned with extreme cases; and it is true that not all autobiographers who describe self-transformation become Prophets in their reincarnations. Many have simply undergone some experience that has changed their cultural status, and, consequently, their self-image. These write autobiographies to assess the mythical significance of their new selves, to re-establish the cultural contact which the change interrupted. They may have risen from relative anonymity to national importance, as did U. S. Grant because of his part in the Civil War. They may have abandoned a troublesome identity for one culturally even more precarious, like the controversial jazz musician Mez Mezzrow, when he decided to become a Negro. Or, they may have had their culture forcibly stripped from them and been hurled by accident into a new life, as was Cabeza de Vaca when, cut off from his countrymen

¹¹ *I Saw My Savior* (New York, 1953), p. 15.

¹² Hinkle, p. 1.

¹³ *Living My Life* (New York, 1931), p. 10.

in the primitive Southwest, he found himself becoming more an Indian than a Conquistador. In each case, the autobiography serves, among other ends,¹⁴ to articulate the experience of transformation and so make sense of it.

This first group of autobiographers is comprised of restless types, searching for truth, undergoing personal metamorphosis, interpreting the holy mysteries of their tribe, forecasting the collective destiny. A second variety of autobiographer has seen the elephant; he has taken the journey prescribed by the myth; and he looks back with some satisfaction on events which seem to have fulfilled his initial expectations. His real life, he says, corresponds significantly to the mythical ideal; it has enacted the values his society holds sacred. Benjamin Franklin introduces his autobiography with these words: "Having emerged from the poverty and obscurity in which I was born and bred, to a state of affluence and some degree of reputation in the world, and having gone so far through life with a considerable share of felicity, the conducting means I made use of, which with the blessing of God so well succeeded, my posterity may like to know, as they may find some of them suitable to their own situations, and therefore fit to be imitated."¹⁵

The mythical elements are all here: the progress from penury to wealth, the religious overtones of secular success, the identification of affluence and worldly reputation with happiness. Furthermore, the sense of personal fulfillment, characteristically, makes the subject feel that he has the right to teach and so to perpetuate a viable tradition. His teaching was well heeded, as we know; a whole nation of entrepreneurs has found him a model of success, perfectly "fit to be imitated."

Franklin's optimism is legendary; it caused him to view his personal past as the fulfillment of earlier prophecy and the foreshadowing of greater things to come in the general history of mankind. A somewhat similar figure, Andrew Carnegie, concerned himself more with his personal career and less with universal history, but he worked equally hard to depict his past as an enactment of divine commandment. God spoke to Carnegie, as He did to Franklin, through natural law, but the law had become more severe in one hundred and fifty years. At one period in his life, Carnegie tells us, he was "all at sea":

All was chaos. I had outgrown the old [religion] and had found no substitute . . . Here came to me Spencer and Darwin, whom I read with absorbing interest, until laying down a volume one day I was

¹⁴ Grant wrote his memoirs to be sure that his family would be solvent after his death; Cabeza de Vaca's recollections appear in an official report to his king.

¹⁵ *Autobiography*, ed. Dixon Wecter (New York, 1948), p. 1. For a very important analysis of this work as a social myth, see Charles Sanford, chap. vii.

able to say, "That settles the question." I had found at last the guides which led me to the temple of man's real knowledge upon the earth. These works were revelations to me: here was the truth which reconciled all things as far as the finite mind can grasp them, the alembic which harmonized hitherto conflicting ideas and brought order out of chaos . . . I was on firm ground, and with every year of my life since there has come less dogmatism, less theology, but greater reverence.¹⁶

The similarity between Franklin and Carnegie has not gone unnoticed; D. H. Lawrence read back into Franklin the excesses, the selfishness and meanness which his ideals bred in the nineteenth century. In Carnegie's autobiography, a shrill note of protestation seems to replace the natural optimism sounded by Franklin, and that work marks a mid-point between eighteenth-century hope and twentieth-century nostalgia. Latter-day Heroes who write these autobiographies of fulfillment are apt to locate the golden age in the past rather than in the future. The past offered grand opportunities for successes like mine, they tell us, but those days will never come again. Striking an unusually docile pose, H. L. Mencken recalls the "gaudy life that young newspaper reporters led in the major American cities at the turn of the century. I believed then," he goes on, "and still believe today, that it was the maddest, gladdest, damndest existence ever enjoyed by mortal youth."¹⁷ The nostalgia evident here resembles that which tints all American writing in the local-color tradition. But the mood is less pervasive in this urban piece than it is in its pastoral counterparts—Mark Twain's *Roughing It*, for example. The city, after all, was to move steadily into the thematic center of American mythology and to push the farm and the frontier farther and farther onto the periphery. By the twentieth century, the autobiographer who wished to characterize his life as a fulfillment of agrarian values and still sound optimistic about the future of those values, had to perform some startling gymnastics to do so. Leland Cutler, in *America is Good to a Country Boy*, portrays Henry Kaiser (and, by strong implication, himself) as a man who has succeeded in commerce and industry because he possesses the rustic virtue of a love for nature.¹⁸ De-

¹⁶ *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. Burton J. Hendrick (2 vols.; Garden City, N. Y., 1933), II, 297. How little the specific matter under consideration by the writer in any autobiography may dictate the stance may be illustrated by a comparison of the widely divergent metaphorical uses of Darwin in the autobiographies of Carnegie, Henry Adams and Hamlin Garland.

¹⁷ *Newspaper Days* (New York, 1941), p. ix.

¹⁸ About Kaiser, Cutler says, "Great builder that he is, I think he has not ever crushed a flower half hidden in the grass that he did not wish he might have walked some other way." *America is Good to a Country Boy* (Stanford, Calif., 1954), p. 156.

spite specific changes in the meaning of optimism we see, a single stance unites all the autobiographers who choose to explain their lives as fulfilling cultural and personal expectation. Each merely adapts the general characteristic of the stance to his particular purposes.

So far, we have looked at several Prophets and some autobiographers whom we call Heroes. The third main group includes all those who, for some reason, find themselves outside the limits of culturally approved behavior. They may be distinguished by the way they react to the realization that their lives have failed to assert and demonstrate the established values and beliefs of their world. To review the several stances included in this group, we may pass from the most contrite to the most unregenerate, looking first at the man who writes his autobiography to confess his sins and to make an example of himself, to get back into the social family.

One of the most typical, and least lovable, of these confessions to appear in recent years is Whittaker Chambers' *Witness*, which chronicles a life of political sin followed by an awakening to grace. "What I had been," Chambers writes, "fell from me like dirty rags. The rags that fell from me were not only Communism. What fell was the whole web of the materialist modern mind—the luminous shroud which it has spun about the spirit of man, paralyzing in the name of rationalism the instinct of his soul for God, denying in the name of knowledge the reality of the soul and its birthright in that mystery on which mere knowledge shatters and falters at every step."¹⁹ Chambers elects here to describe his passage in the language of evangelical anti-intellectualism, which has been an integral part of American mythology since the eighteenth century, at least. Such a tone was guaranteed to reunite him with those from whom he felt most exiled.

Our next type adopts a considerably different tactic as he works to insinuate himself into a state of social grace. Instead of repenting his past misdeeds, P. T. Barnum argues that they were not misdeeds at all, but virtues in disguise. Dedicating his autobiography to the "Universal Yankee Nation of which I Am Proud to Be One," Barnum refutes charge after charge that he is a humbug, a cheat and a thief. What have been called his avarice and guile, he insists, are the Yankee virtues of thrift and ingenuity—all of which he learned from Ben Franklin.²⁰ Indeed, by the time he has finished reporting his life in the jargon of American commerce, it is hard to distinguish between his career and that of any respectable entrepreneur. Of his early genius for business, he tells us:

¹⁹ *Witness* (New York, 1952), p. 83.

²⁰ *Barnum's Own Story* (New York, 1961), p. 8.

"Always looking for the main chance . . . I had sheep of my own, a calf of which I was the sole proprietor, and other individual property which made me feel, at twelve years of age, that I was a man of substance."²¹ Such a career would have to please even so secure an insider as Leland Cutler, who suggested that great men in America succeeded because they learned at an early age "what money meant."²²

Moving farther along a scale marked off in degrees of commitment to established belief, we come to the socially condemned autobiographer who feels that his apparent social failures are actually insignificant, since he was following a higher and truer law than that espoused by his society. Such men portray themselves as condemned by a blind or unregenerate society, and they use their autobiographies to show that *they* know the true way. Mary Austin, criticized for her feminist agitation and her oddly emancipated ways, explains, "Since the pattern of my adult behavior was in no sense a made-up pattern, but one that rose through the surface index of Mary, myself, out of a deeper self, of which the umbilical cord which bound it to the source of selfness had not been cut, it in a measure justified all its behaviors, rid me of the onus of responsibility for those which failed to coincide with the current standards of success."²³ No apologetic tone marks this stance, only a certain lingering pity for the uninitiated multitude.

More rational and less subjective is the self-exiled critic who has found a high ground on which to stand and survey the inconsistencies, hypocrisies and injustices of the myth. Whittaker Chambers denigrated his intellect to make himself morally acceptable to the American public; the critic will often assert his intellect in order to emphasize the degree of his detachment from popular belief. After excoriating all the minions of American know-nothingness—"the prohibitionists of Kansas, the lynchers of Georgia, the hardheaded businessmen in the chambers of commerce in a thousand cities, the members of the National Security League, The American Legion, the Loyal American League . . . all these self-appointed inquisitors and Black Hundreds"—Ludwig Lewisohn underscores his position by refusing to adopt one of his country's most cherished attitudes: "Shall I say now, in order to end agreeably: It is always

²¹ Barnum, p. 6.

²² In explanation of the success of certain construction magnates, Cutler says, "The mothers and fathers of these boys . . . did the best they could, unconsciously training them for their later roles: to work unceasingly . . . to know what money meant . . . to love the land of their birth. . . . Because these boys grew to manhood honoring their fathers and their mothers, their days were many in the land and the name of the Six Companies is a name to reckon with." *America is Good to a Country Boy*, pp. 154-55.

²³ *Earth Horizon* (New York, 1932), p. viii.

darkest before the dawn? No; for that kind of professional optimism is precisely one of our national vices. The hour is dark."²⁴

Interestingly enough, both Chambers and Lewisohn regard their lives as morally symbolic and, like Franklin's, "fit to be imitated." Lewisohn says, "There are thousands of people among us who can find in my adventures a living symbol of their own and in whom, as in me, this moment in history has burned away delusion to the last shred."²⁵ And Chambers, seeking an altogether different end, intones, "On a scale personal enough to be felt by all, but big enough to be symbolic, the two irreconcilable faiths of our time—Communism and Freedom—came to grips in the persons of two conscious and resolute men . . . The Great Case would end in the destruction of one or both of the contending figures, just as the history of our times . . . can end only in the destruction of one or both of the contending forces."²⁶ Whether he agonizes over his exile or seeks to ensure it, it seems, the Outsider is often moved to enlist a following by capitalizing on the myth which defines his stance. As he cleanses his soul, Chambers becomes another Cotton Mather, struggling with the devil and purifying the Commonwealth; Lewisohn assumes the guise of Tom Paine, ridiculing superstition and preaching the true, enlightened freedom.

The reason that these two men betray this similarity despite their obvious differences, of course, is that, Outcasts or not, they both care deeply about American life and its future. Our next type, however—the last of those whom we call the Outsiders—deserves that name most of all. While Chambers, Barnum, Lewisohn and Mary Austin adopt attitudes actually provided for by American mythology, and so are, in a sense, acceptable Outsiders, the most abandoned type cares nothing for acknowledged American values. Like Mae West, who attacks American sexual hypocrisy in *Goodness Had Nothing to Do With It*, this autobiographer mentions our values only to expose what he considers their idiocies, and he does so with unmistakable detachment, finding some sort of unique, individual balance. As Miss West says, "I have held firmly to my ideas and my values . . . I have made a peace, or at least an armed truce, with myself and with the universe. I am in key with my world as I know it and have seen it."²⁷

Very few of these renegades manage to maintain their defiant attitudes throughout their autobiographies, however. Even Mae West felt impelled by the public nature of the form to intone, irrelevantly, "I have done

²⁴ *Up Stream: An American Chronicle* (New York, 1922), pp. 236, 248.

²⁵ Lewisohn, p. 10.

²⁶ Chambers, p. 4.

²⁷ *Goodness Had Nothing to Do With It* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1959), p. 257.

what I set out to do, which was to review . . . a life that goes down deeply into the human enigma, the problems of man (and woman) in relation to the godhead and the yet unopened secrets of the universe,"²⁸ and to mention the importance of religion (unspecified) in sexual education. Caryl Chessman, although he operated all his life well outside the bounds of acceptable behavior, offers his life as a constructive criticism of his society, which he hopes will make the necessary legal alterations and prosper. An autobiographical statement like William Burroughs' introduction to *Naked Lunch*, which depicts the writer's total withdrawal from the forms of belief which Americans cherish, is rare, even in this age of dissident memoirs. No American autobiographer, Henry Miller included, has assumed the stature and notoriety of Sade.

All these stances, with the possible exception of the last, derive partly from the traits of character and forms of behavior prescribed by the American myth and partly from the subject's knowledge of previous autobiographies. Misch has discussed how much any autobiographer may learn from his predecessors, revising earlier modes of self portrayal to suit his own needs. Columbus learned to see himself and to interpret his experience by following the lead of St. John. Cotton Mather modeled his self-image on Luther, just as Luther seems to have emulated Augustine. Franklin tells us that Bunyan and Mather were his teachers; but since he aimed to represent his life as an earthly pilgrimage, we see how earlier forms may be adapted to present demands. Barnum shows us still another application of the basic form when he legitimizes otherwise reprehensible conduct by reporting it in the manner of Franklin. Autobiography does not merely follow the cultural pattern, it is clear; it contributes to that pattern by developing and formulating the very structure of individuality.

We must always remember that these stances are forms of self-knowledge and self-portrayal assumed for literary and cultural purposes. Obviously, no man maintains the same stance throughout his life, nor does he usually take the same attitude toward all problems at any one time in his life. His journals and his letters may show him taking on a number of these personae over time. But when he comes to write his autobiography—whether he seeks to discover himself through it or to publicize what he has already found out—he must adopt some consistent, overriding view of himself and his past. He must identify the "I" which unites all his past experiences. If he does not, his life will seem to him fragmented and incoherent, and its story will appear to us pointless and confused. Mencken, for example, presents himself throughout his long

²⁸ Mae West, p. 256.

career in a variety of guises—irascible critic, learned scholar, champion of human dignity, irresponsible bad boy. But when he was faced with the task of organizing his recollections into a single volume, he recognized the need to come to some decision about what they all amounted to. He says of his life:

My days of work have been spent . . . in recording the current scene, usually in a far from acquiescent spirit. But I must confess, with sixty only around the corner, that I have found existence on this meanest of planets extremely amusing, and taking one day with another, perfectly satisfactory. . . . The Gaseous Vertebrata who own, operate and afflict the universe have treated me with excessive politeness, and when I mount the gallows at last I may well say with the Psalmist (putting it, of course, in the prudent past tense): The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places.²⁹

Any stance, then, is a cultural convention, formulated first by a particularly daring and imaginative analyst of the self, like Augustine or Rousseau, and then imitated by a host of autobiographical followers. But what happens when none of the conventions satisfies an autobiographer's need to order the details of his life? What happens to the man whose faith in the myth has led him to ruin? The autobiographer in this predicament either invents some new way of giving meaning to his experience or records his *anomie* in what we may call the autobiography of the Disenchanted. This man no longer draws strength from his culture, and having nothing to substitute for it, he can neither criticize it nor flout its mandates with any satisfaction. When F. Scott Fitzgerald realized that his life was not leading to paradise, he described his sense of loss:

This was something I could neither accept nor struggle against, something which tended to make my efforts obsolescent, as the chain stores have crippled the small merchant, an exterior force, unbeatable. . . . There was not an "I" any more—not a basis on which I could organize my self-respect. . . . It was strange to have no self—to be like a little boy left alone in a big house, who knew that now he could do anything he wanted to do, but found that there was nothing that he wanted to do.³⁰

Fitzgerald strikes here at some of the fundamental tenets of American faith which have gone to define many of the stances we examined earlier: the efficacy of the individual will, the infinite resources of the

²⁹ H. L. Mencken, *Happy Days* (New York, 1940), p. ix.

³⁰ *The Crack Up*, ed. Edmund Wilson (New York, 1956), pp. 78, 79.

spirit, the joys of freedom. This stance, among all those we have discussed so far, seems to have the most to tell us about those autobiographical forms which we recognize as being distinctly modern.

We have seen that autobiographical form is inextricably bound up with cultural belief, that civilization prescribes fairly specific roles for its citizens to adopt when portraying themselves in writing. In Western civilization, these roles share a common quality: they all express an integrated, continuing personality which transcends the limitations and irregularities of time and space and unites all of one's apparently contradictory experiences into an identifiable whole. This notion of individual identity, in fact, may well be the central belief of our culture. With all its ramifications—personal responsibility, individual destiny, dissent, vocation and so forth—it forms the core of our being and the fabric of our history. Ever since St. Augustine wrote his *Confessions* and turned autobiography into a literary act of spiritual self-consciousness, it has retained an unswerving belief in the individual as a definable entity, linked to the divine, which reveals itself through self-analysis.

Although this belief in the integrated consciousness continues to inform large areas of public activity at the present time, it has become the object of increasing critical examination during the past century—especially in those places where social and institutional forms which express and support it have been disrupted by ideological upheaval, revolution and war. Self-consciousness, it seems, will recommend itself only as long as the world allows some fruitful occupation for the liberated individual. When it only thwarts and dismays him, he may seek to escape from identity, into selflessness, anonymity and rest. Or, on the other hand, the anxieties which attend purposeless and corrosive self-awareness may prompt the subject to go back and find some new basis upon which to establish his being, and so create a new order of life. Although the impulse to escape from being is antithetical to the very meaning of autobiography, we should expect to find written records of those individuals who are searching for new forms of identity.

And so we do, but not in conventional autobiography, which grew out of a very special idea of individuality and so is unfit in its traditional form to examine new possibilities of being. The ideals of spiritual identity gave autobiography its subject and its form; new ideals must seek new forms appropriate to them. The modern autobiographer needs an especially flexible form, one that can always outrun attempts to define it, one notably amenable to innovation and experiment. Unable to identify himself within the conventional framework, the modern auto-

biographer seems to have taken to the novel to find the freedom he needs to conduct his experiments with self.

Traditional autobiography can satisfy only those self-analysts whose identities are clear enough and whose lives seem coherent enough to be expressed in conventional form. The teleology implied in the convention of a narrator surveying his past in terms of the present, rules out all autobiographers who perceive no such purposeful progression or continuity in the events of their lives. Although he wrote no formal autobiography, Emerson exhibited the frame of mind most amenable to it. In a letter to Margaret Fuller, F. O. Matthiessen tells us, he stated that "he could discern no essential difference between the experience of his boyhood and that of his maturity . . . 'A little more excitement now [Emerson said] but the fact identical, both in my consciousness and in my relations.'"³¹ The inviolable, transcendent self provided him with a sense of identity, apparently, which survived all temporal change.

Wright Morris, on the other hand, feeling no such assurance about his identity, describes how he has sought other forms to chronicle his conceptions of self. "Before coming of age," Mr. Morris writes,

. . . I had led, or rather been led by, half a dozen separate lives. Each life had its own scene, its own milieu; it frequently appeared to have its own beginning and ending, the only connecting tissue being the narrow thread of my *self*. I had been there, but that, indeed, explained nothing. In an effort to come to terms with the experience, I processed it in fragments, collecting pieces of the puzzle. In time, a certain overall pattern *appeared* to be there. But this appearance was essentially a process—an imaginative act of apprehension—rather than a research into the artifacts of my life.³²

Unable to adopt one unifying attitude, the autobiographer in this uncertain condition substitutes for exposition an examination of the details of experience. The process of review takes the place of the consistent, evaluative point of view as a unifying principle. Since that process may adopt such non-narrative modes of unification as symbolism and imagery, the surface of the work may appear discontinuous and fragmented. The writer speaks here as an individual, whose unwillingness to assume one of the identities prescribed by his culture prevents him from speaking as a public figure and from employing the extended, continuous forms appropriate to those roles.

When the novel abandoned its original function of evaluating social behavior from an increasingly clear point of view and began to devise

³¹ F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (New York, 1941), p. 58.

³² *The Territory Ahead* (New York, 1963), p. 15.

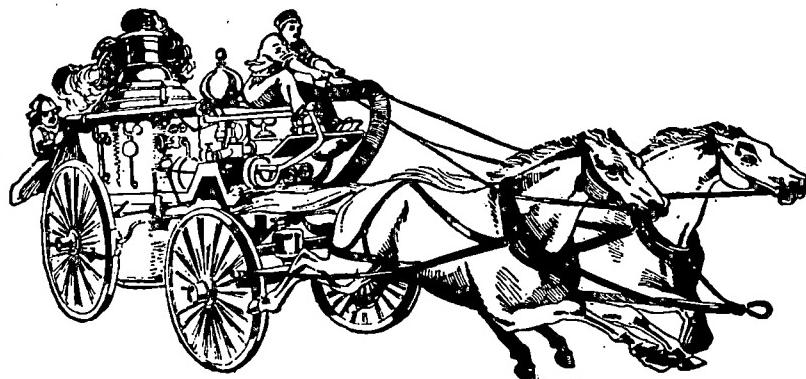
ways to escape the moral smugness which its bourgeois origins had thrust upon it, it turned away from history to the lyric for less explicit, more symbolic modes of expression. In so doing, it recoiled from society and directed its gaze inward, searching for some surer experiential basis for reality and judgment. This, it seems, is that point where autobiography and the novel begin to merge. Under the pressures and anxieties of social dislocation, the novel became increasingly autobiographical. Disenchanted with the conventional roles which society offered, the autobiographer found in the new novel the chance to examine personal experience without having to assume some ill-fitting social guise. Although conventional autobiographies and novels continue to be written by people who have no quarrel with tradition, those works which we recognize as being significantly of our time have made the terms "novel" and "autobiography" very often indistinguishable.

This entire problem of the purpose and limits of the organizing judgment has generated some of the most important critical studies of the twentieth century. And yet we too often assume that the heavily subjective novel has been restricted to Europe, at least until the twentieth century. We concentrate on the German line of development from Goethe to Hesse, or the even more popular English evolution of Joyce out of Butler, forgetting that nineteenth-century America produced a group of writers who experimented continually with autobiographical forms to solve their problems of spiritual alienation from a society whose myths failed to satisfy their personal demands. Poe's *Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* adopts the conventions of autobiographical travel narrative to explore the labyrinths of the disoriented psyche. Herman Melville and Mark Twain arrived at their respective masterpieces by way of the same autobiographical form, the exactly opposite narrative modes of *Moby-Dick* and *Huckleberry Finn* reflecting their respective authors' very similar conclusions about the value of personal experience. Furthermore, the works which follow these two great novels—that is, *Pierre* and *The Mysterious Stranger*—examine the psychic disintegration which results when the self recoils altogether from established norms of judgment.

Wherever we choose to study it, however, the fact remains that autobiography can elucidate for us those central issues which have brought literature to its present state, inform its present concerns and chart its future course. Certainly, modern writers must find their way out of the apparent impasse into which attention to the self has brought them; but just as certainly, they cannot go back to the older forms. Regarding the formal problems of his own autobiography, Henry Adams said in

his "Editor's Preface" that "his great ambition was to complete St. Augustine's 'Confessions,' but that St. Augustine, like a great artist, had worked from multiplicity to unity, while he, like a small one, had to reverse the method."³³ The way back to unity is closed off, obstructed by the wreckage of a hundred philosophies. The new directions can come only from present attempts to find in experience new forms, new myths, new roles for the self, which the writer can adopt to speak once again as an integral part of his culture.

³³ *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York, 1931), pp. vii-viii.



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The American Child as Seen by British Travelers, 1845-1935

WHILE BRITISH TRAVELERS TO AMERICAN SHORES DISAGREED WITH ONE another on many topics between the years 1845 and 1935, they spoke with practically one voice upon two subjects: American schools and American children.¹ On the whole they thought the public school system admirable; with near unanimity they found the children detestable.

This adds up to a paradox, for if the innovation of free public education was, as most of these visitors contended, the best thing about America, surely some decent effect upon the schools' young charges should have been faintly discernible. Yet the British were not at all charmed by the youngsters, and the foreign observers had very few kind things to say in behalf of American children.

The paradox as stated must leave one unsatisfied. In any nation one should expect the child to stamp his impress upon the climate of the entire society; the detestable child should become the detestable adult. But especially in a nation which the British characterized by the term "youthful"—the epithet more often used in a complimentary rather than a deprecatory fashion—one would with reason expect to find some association between the word and the actual young people of the country.

There was no question as to what quality in the children did most to nettle the Englishmen. As David Macrae said in 1867: "American children are undoubtedly precocious."² In the same year, Greville Chester explained a little this theme, which appeared with more monotonous

¹ The evidence for this article derives from a reading of over 260 published books composed by Britons who wrote of the United States on the basis of visits made here between 1845 and 1935. The essay itself is drawn from my dissertation at Columbia, *The British Traveler in America, 1860-1935*.

² Macrae, *The Americans at Home* (New York, 1952), p. 45. (First edition, Edinburgh, 1870).

regularity than did any other in these books. "Many of the children in this country," he said, "appear to be painfully precocious—small stuck-up caricatures of men and women, with but little of the fresh ingenuousness and playfulness of childhood."³

Again in that same uneventful year of 1867, the Robertsons embellished this developing portrait thus:

Their infant lips utter smart sayings, and baby oaths are too often encouraged . . . even by their own parents, whose counsel and restraint they quickly learn wholly to despise. It is not uncommon to see children of ten calling for liquor at the bar, or puffing a cigar in the streets. In the cars we met a youth of respectable and gentlemanly exterior who thought no shame to say that he learned to smoke at eight, got first 'tight' at twelve, and by fourteen had run the whole course of debauchery.⁴

Every year American youth was similarly berated for its precocity. "Precocity" politely expressed the British feeling that American children were pert, impudent, disrespectful, arrogant brats. But "precocious" meant more than that; it implied that American children weren't children at all. Three British mothers made this point. Therese Yelverton exclaimed that "in the course of my travels I never discovered that there were any American *children*. Diminutive men and women in process of growing into big ones, I have met with; but the child in the full sense attached to that word in England—a child with rosy cheeks and bright joyous laugh, its docile obedience and simplicity, its healthful play and its disciplined work, is a being almost unknown in America."⁵

Daniel Boorstin in the introduction to a new edition of *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains* wrote of how Isabella Bird "saw a society where, in a sense, everyone was young, yet where the most painful sight was 'the extinction of childhood. I have never seen any children, only debased imitations of men and women.'"⁶ And Lady Emmeline Stuart-Wortley, before the Civil War, commented: "Little America is unhappily, generally, only grown-up America, seen through a telescope turned the wrong way. The one point, perhaps, in which I must concur with other writers on the United States, is there being no real child-like children here."⁷

³ Chester, *Transatlantic Sketches* (London, 1869), pp. 230-31.

⁴ William and W. F. Robertson, *Our American Tour* (Edinburgh, 1871), pp. 9-10.

⁵ Therese Yelverton, *Teresina in America* (London, 1875), I, 263. She also found them to be "insolent, unruly, and rude." *Ibid.*, p. 269. Oscar Wilde thought that little girls were more charming in their precocity than little boys. *Writings* (New York, 1907), III, 251.

⁶ Isabella Lucy Bird, *A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains*. The edition by Daniel Boorstin (Norman, Okla., 1960) was used, p. xxii. (First edition, London, 1875).

⁷ Stuart-Wortley, *Travels in the United States* (Paris, 1851), p. 67.

Eyre Crowe tells how he and his traveling companion, William Makepeace Thackeray, came across a youngster reading a newspaper, "already devouring the toughest leaders, and mastering the news of the world whilst whiffing his cigar, and not without making shies at a huge expectator close at hand."⁸ The picture of the cigar-smoking cherub flashed recurrently in these accounts.

The visitors did not have to search far for an explanation—at least a superficial explanation—for this disconcerting childhood behavior. Although a few of them remarked at the leniency of the common schools and regretted the lack of corporal punishment handed out there,⁹ many more felt that the only doses of discipline ever received by the child were administered, even if in small quantities, in the schoolrooms. No, it was unquestionably in the home that the child was indulged, and indulgence gave him his swagger.

His parents either could not or else chose not to discipline their offspring. To be sure, the school system was not blameless. Many, like Fraser, regarded the school "as an extension of the family," which, by its very effectiveness made matters more difficult for mother and father.¹⁰

. . . it must be allowed that schools are robbing parents of the power to control their families. The school has drawn to itself so much of the love and veneration of the young that in the homes missing its spell they grow unruly. Parents are not experts in the management of children, nor have they the moral weight of an institution to back them up, hence they fail to keep up the smooth ascendancy of the school.¹¹

P. A. Vaile blamed the American mother: "She is refusing to perform her part of the contract. First she 'went back' on raising her children, now she does not want to have any children at all."¹² Mrs. Humphreys raged at "the conspicuous absence of maternal instinct as a feature of American marriages."¹³

Many others accused fathers, but usually with greater sympathy. After all, the father simply worked too hard all day to have much time, in-

⁸Eyre Crowe, *With Thackeray in America* (London, 1893), p. 21.

⁹John Strathesk [John Tod], *Bits About America* (Edinburgh, 1887), p. 149; Richard DeBary, *The Land of Promise* (London, 1908), p. 131.

¹⁰James Nelson Fraser, *America, Old and New* (London, 1910), p. 280.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 282.

¹²P. A. Vaile, Y., *America's Peril* (London, 1909), p. 111.

¹³Mrs. Desmond Humphreys, *America Through English Eyes* (London, n.d. [1913?]), p. 165.

terest or energy to devote to his little ones. "The husband has his occupations, friends, and amusements."¹⁴

No matter which parent had to bear the burden of guilt, many an Englishman simply felt that home life in the United States just wasn't homelike; it lacked atmosphere, comfort, love, play and warmth. It never became the cozy, friendly hearth which imparted to a family a sense of kinship, identity or oneness. Long after young couples had forsaken the custom of dwelling in boarding houses or hotels and exposing their tiny ones to the dregs of society—a custom deplored by every Englishman—long after this, W. L. George, along with most others, refused to admit that Americans still had any idea as to what constituted a "real" home.

The hard child [he said] suggests the hard home, which is characteristic of America. I visited many houses in the United States, and, except among the definitely rich, I found them rather uncomfortable. They felt bare, untenanted; they were too neat, too new . . . one missed the comfortable accumulation of broken screens, old fire irons, and seven-year-old volumes of the *Illustrated London News*, which make up the dusty, frowsy feeling of home. The American house is not a place where one lives, but a place where one merely sleeps, eats, sits, works.¹⁵

George may have been a bit unfair to expect to find "seven-year-old volumes of the *Illustrated London News*" lying about, but he had a right to notice the lack of age; it takes years for a family to implant its brand on a structure of brick and mortar.¹⁶ Perhaps, as many visitors rightly pointed out, Americans were too much on the go, too mobile for them ever to fulfill George's requirements for home-ness.¹⁷ This nonetheless did not excuse the parents from their failure to bring up their children appropriately. Joseph Hatton, in 1881, begged the mothers and fathers to take their responsibilities as parents more seriously than they were and to realize, as any sensible person must, that their overindulgence of the child was "excessive and injurious."¹⁸

Little Fritz, a pretty little American boy who sat as the subject for one of Philip Burne-Jones' paintings, told his grandmother, in the artist's

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 161. Horace Vachell said that in the West at least "you will find fathers and mothers the slaves of their children." *Life and Sport on the Pacific Slope* (New York, 1901), p. 74.

¹⁵ Walter L. George, *Hail Columbia!* (New York, 1921), p. 199.

¹⁶ At least "if ever so humble, the abodes in America are invariably neat and cleanly," claimed Alfred Pairpoint in 1890 in *Rambles in America* (Boston, 1891), p. 166.

¹⁷ Said George Steevens, *The Land of the Dollar* (Edinburgh, 1897): "You cannot call a people who will never be happy ten years in the same place . . . home-loving in the English sense." p. 313.

¹⁸ Joseph Hatton, *Today in America* (New York, 1881), p. 7.

presence, "I'll kick your head!" After being chided and asked to apologize there was "dead silence on the part of Fritz." Finally, after some more pleading, Fritz relented and uttered "a few perfunctory and scarcely audible sounds, which were generously construed by the family as expressive of contrition and penitence; and Fritz started again with a clear record, for a brief period. His mother had absolutely no influence on him whatever, and she admitted as much."¹⁹

Other American parents admitted as much also; they were fully aware of their inability to control their little ones, but they just didn't know what to do about it. L. P. Jacks, in 1933, let an American mother speak her heart about her utter helplessness and frustration in a way that was rather revealing and even poignant:

We mothers are rapidly losing all influence over our children, and I don't know how we can recover it. We have little or no control over them, whether boys or girls. The schools and the colleges take them out of our hands. They give them everything for nothing, and that is what the children expect when they come home. Their standards and their ideals are formed in the school atmosphere, and more by their companions than their teachers. They become more and more intractable to home influence and there is nothing for it but to let them go their own way.²⁰

But the majority of the Britons did not accept either the influence of the schools or the social fact of mobility as sufficient explanations for the precocious child; they would have had little justification for disliking the child with the fervor they did and deplored the parents' follies so strongly if these impersonal forces accounted adequately for the situation.

They felt, rather, that causes ran deeper, in more insidious channels. Not only did the parents spoil their children, but they *wanted* to spoil them. Not only did the mothers and fathers put up with more than they should have, but they were actually proud of their babies. The Britons were especially distressed when they decided that parents felt, as a rule, not the least bit guilty over their own efforts or over the way their boys and girls were turning out. The travelers came not to the conclusion that American parents were unable to discipline their sons and daughters, but that they deliberately chose to "let them go their own way." This either infuriated the by now bewildered visitor, or else made him desperate to figure out just how this insanity could possibly reign.

William Howard Russell could not accept the excuse that the schools

¹⁹ Sir Philip Burne-Jones, *Dollars and Democracy* (New York, 1904), p. 36.

²⁰ L. P. Jacks, *My American Friends* (New York, 1933), p. 149. Notice the young mother's stress on the influence which the peer-group culture held over her children.

pre-empted parental power since "there is nothing in the American [school] system to prevent the teaching of religious and moral duties by parents at home; but it would seem as if very little of that kind of instruction was given by the busy fathers and anxious mothers of the Republic. . . ."²¹

Horace Vachell, as did many others, told a child story that turned into a mother story. It seems that one day the author was in the parlor of a ship filled with ailing people, including the author's own mother who was suffering with a bad headache. Into this sickly assemblage trooped our hero—a small American boy who decided to soothe the aches of all by playing on the bagpipes! "The wildest pibroch ever played in Highland glen was sweet melody compared to the strains produced by this urchin."²² He naturally continued to play, louder than ever, despite the dagged glances hurled at him from all around the parlor; he stopped only when he tired. Then, instead of permitting sweet peace, "he flung down the pipes, walked to the piano, opened it, sat down, and began to hammer the keys with his feet."²³

At this turn of events, our long-suffering author had had enough. "'You play very nicely with your feet,' I ventured to say, as I lifted him from the stool, 'but some of these ladies are suffering with headache, and your music distresses them. Run away, like a good boy, and don't come back again.'"²⁴

But Vachell's story did not end here because, in the final analysis, this is more of a mother tale than a child story. "The mother was furious. Had I been Herod the Great, red-handed after the slaughter of the Innocents, she could not have looked more indignant or reproachful. I was interfering with the sacred rights of the American child to do what he pleased, where he pleased, and when he pleased."²⁵

Vachell's first conclusion inevitably was that American children were unspeakable monsters, utterly lacking in "sense of duty, reverence, humility, obedience."²⁶ His second conclusion was, however, more interesting and more important, namely that parents actually "encourage the egoism latent in all children, till each becomes an autocrat."²⁷

Once this appalling discovery had been verified, it occurred to the more curious of the Britons to raise the appropriate question: how could the American parents be proud of these diminutive devils?

²¹ William Howard Russell, *Hesperothen: Notes from the West* (London, 1882), II, 156.

²² Vachell, p. 80.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 79. One should bear in mind at all times the difficulties the travelers had of meeting representative American families since, as W. L. George candidly admitted, "truly representative families generally keep themselves rather to themselves." George, p. viii.

Sir Edwin Arnold presented a question of this sort, in more general form, to one whom he regarded as an expert on this strange *genus Americanus*: Walt Whitman. "But have you reverence enough among your people?" I asked. "Do the American children respect and obey their parents sufficiently, and are the common people grateful enough to the best men, their statesmen, leaders, teachers, poets, and "bettters" generally?"²⁸

To this most fundamental of all inquiries Whitman responded: "'Alloons, comrade!, your old world has been soaked and saturated in reverentiality. We are laying here in America the basements and foundation rooms of a new era. And we are doing it, on the whole, pretty well and substantially. By-and-by, when that job is through, *we will look after the steeples and pinnacles.*'"²⁹

Whitman and Arnold included childhood precocity within the larger framework of a new people refusing to pay homage to their betters, refusing to revere their "superiors." Such reverence constitutes one of the necessary ingredients of an aristocratically-oriented society. Lack of that reverence suggests an egalitarian society, and these two distinguished men of letters were implying that the precocious child was symptomatic not merely of weak, stupid, willful parents, but rather of the pervasiveness in American society of the principle of equality. In fact no generalization about America was made more forcefully or repeatedly by the commentators en masse than that the thrust of the American belief in equality (understood as opportunity to rise more than as classlessness) was ubiquitous; it extended into every corner of the daily institutional fabric of American life—into the schools wherein all children had the right to a free education, into politics where all had the right to vote, into the enhanced place of women in American society, into the fluid class structure, into the churches wherein voluntary religion was the rule, and, perhaps most astonishing of all, apparently even into the homes where little boys and little girls were granted unheard-of liberties.

Captain Marryat, as early as 1839, related a well-known example illustrating this last point:

Imagine a child of three years old in England behaving thus:—

"Johnny, my dear, come here," says his mamma.
 "I won't," cries Johnny.
 "You must, my love, you are all wet, and you'll catch cold."
 "I won't," replies Johnny.
 "Come, my sweet, and I've something for you."
 "I won't."

²⁸ Sir Edwin Arnold, *Seas and Lands* (New York, 1891), pp. 78-79.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

"Oh! Mr. —, do, pray make Johnny come in."
"Come in, Johnny," says the father.
"I won't."
"I tell you, come in directly, sir—do you hear?"
"I won't," replies the urchin, taking to his heels.
"A sturdy republican, sir," says his father to me, smiling at the boy's resolute disobedience.³⁰

In 1845 Francis Wyse generalized upon incidents like these, placing them in a broad social context. "There is seldom any very great restraint," he noted, "imposed upon the youth of America whose precocious intellect, brought forth and exercised at an early, and somewhat premature age, and otherwise encouraged under the republican institutions of the country, has generally made them impatient of parental authority."³¹

Parental authority did not sensibly differ from any other exercise of power: royal, military, governmental or private. Americans had established their independence in rebellion against authority; they had rejected all artificially imposed forms of superiority; and they had proclaimed the equality of man. Surely these principles should extend to the family. Indeed, Jacks talked aptly of the way in which children had applied (with considerable parental approval) the Declaration of Independence to themselves.³² And James Fullarton Muirhead, who composed one of the most informative chapters on this topic, formulated the grand generalization thus: "The theory of the equality of man is rampant in the nursery."³³ He referred to the infants as "young republicans," "democratic sucklings," "budding citizens of a free republic."³⁴

Here then was another application of the theory of equality—one which even the friendly Muirhead could not get himself to smile upon. It "hardly tends," he patiently tried to explain, "to make the American child an attractive object to the stranger from without. On the contrary, it is very apt to make said stranger long strenuously to spank these budding citizens of a free republic, and to send them to bed *instanter*."³⁵

One must, of course, sympathize with the British traveler as he suffered through each encounter with these young specimens of the New World. But their hate affair is as much beside the point as their love affair with

³⁰ Quoted in Lawrence A. Cremin, *The American Common School* (New York, 1951), p. 217.

³¹ *America: Its Realities and Resources* (London, 1846), p. 295.

³² *My American Friends*, pp. 150-51.

³³ Muirhead, *America, The Land of Contrasts* (London, 1902), p. 64. (First edition, London, 1898).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 63, 65.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

the schools. Both child-rearing at home and the nation-wide system of compulsory public education were faithful to the omnipresent force of equality, and the paradox which began this chapter turns out to be no paradox at all. The commentators liked what they saw in the classrooms because authority was being exercised. It was being exercised by teachers who wielded it in the interests of learning and morality. When the visitors confronted the child outside the schools and in the context of home and family they were appalled by what they believed to be the universal and inexcusable betrayal of authority by the parents.

This reversal in the roles of authority vis-à-vis children disoriented the observers to such an extent that many of them never realized that, just a few chapters before their excoriation of the American child, they had been blessing his development in the schoolrooms. Although the traveler frequently sensed that the "success" of the teachers and the indulgent "failures" of the parents were related to each other, and that both stemmed from the same peculiar general assumptions in which American society was rooted, not one of them ever managed to pose squarely the problem of how and whether dual authority *could* be exerted on the child, of just how parent and teacher *should* combine their efforts in child-rearing, given the public school system and the widespread assumption that the child was an equal partner in the family "team."

The origins of this dilemma may be traced back to colonial days when, under the pressure of new conditions, the familiar family pattern brought over from the Old World suffered major transformations affecting both child-rearing practices and the role of education.

The traditional family was the wide kinship group with the source of power vested in the father and extending outward to include not only wife and children, but cousins, other relatives and servants as well. The father was the chief educator, transferring the traditions of his culture and vocational training itself to his sons. But authority and traditionalism were, as revealed in an excellent study by Bernard Bailyn, inadequate for conditions in the New World where problems were new, land abundant, labor scarce and old solutions to old problems irrelevant.³⁶ In these circumstances "the young—less bound by prescriptive memories, more adaptable, more vigorous—stood often at advantage. Learning faster, they came to see the world more familiarly, to concede more readily to unexpected necessities, to sense more accurately the phasing of a new life. They and not their parents became the effective guides to a new

³⁶ Bernard Bailyn, *Education in the Forming of American Society* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1960).

world, and they thereby gained a strange, anomalous authority difficult to accommodate within the ancient structure of family life."³⁷

While the details need not concern us here, the traditional family and educative pattern could not survive these challenges.

By the middle of the eighteenth century the classic lineaments of the American family as modern sociologists describe them—the "isolation of the conjugal unit," the "maximum of dispersion of the lines of descent," partible inheritances, and multilineal growth—had appeared. The consequences can hardly be exaggerated. Fundamental aspects of social life were affected. In the reduced, nuclear family, thrown back upon itself, traditional gradations in status tended to fall to the level of necessity. Relationships tended more toward achievement than ascription. The status of women rose; marriage, even in the eyes of the law, tended to become a contract between equals. Above all, the development of the child was affected.³⁸

One of the effects on the child cited by Bailyn concerned the passage of the child into society as "the once elaborate interpenetration of family and community dissolved." A result was that "the individual acquired an insulation of consciousness," a "heightened . . . sense of separateness" from society, and particularly from the state which no longer could "command his automatic involvement."³⁹ Perhaps this is what the British meant by precocity.

A second result came as the Puritans transferred the primary educative responsibilities from "the maimed . . . family to formal instructional institutions, and in so doing not only endowed schools with a new importance but expanded their purpose beyond pragmatic vocationalism toward vaguer but more basic cultural goals."⁴⁰ Perhaps this explains why the British abused American parents.

The commentators who believed that parents must exercise authority over children were not pleased by what they saw in American families. In order to muster any kind words it was necessary to revise traditional conceptions of the family and accept a measure of equality in the home, accept the notion that the various family members could be close friends.

Dicey was one who was able to take this step. He concluded one of his volumes in 1863 in praise of "the great charm which surrounds all family relations in the North. Compared with Europe, domestic scandals are unknown; and between parents and their grown-up children, there

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

exists a degree of familiarity and intimacy which one seldom witnesses in this country." ⁴¹

There were other companions besides the parents and grown-up children. Growing boys and their fathers were companions, wrote Zincke in 1868. "In America the father never loses sight of his child, who thus grows up as his companion, and is soon treated as a companion, and as in some sort an equal." ⁴² Zincke went on to relate a pleasant incident he observed on a train between a fourteen-year-old boy and his father:

They had long been talking on a footing of equality. . . . At last, to while away the time, they began to sing together. First they accompanied each other. Then they took alternate lines; at last alternate words. In this of course they tripped frequently, each laughing at the other for his mistakes. There was no attempt at keeping up the dignity of a parent, as might have been considered necessary and proper with us. There was no reserve. They were in a certain sense already on an equal footing of persons of the same age.⁴³

Mothers and daughters were companions, Low maintained. "Daughters are much with their mothers, and they become their companions younger than they do in Europe. At an age when the French girl, for instance, is still demurely attending her convent, or the English girl is in the hands of her governess, her more emancipated sister across the Atlantic is calling with her mother on her friends, or assisting her in the drawing-room on her reception days." ⁴⁴

Sons and daughters received equal treatment, claimed Saunders. Whereas "in an English family, as a rule, the greatest consideration is shown to the boys," in America, if anything, "the wishes of the girls would be first listened to, and their education provided for." The boy, after all, "is as eager to start life on his own account as is a greyhound to rush after the hare." "In the matter of early independence both sexes are equal." ⁴⁵

Even husbands and wives were companions. While the wife "will not consent to being submerged by her children, she gives much of her time to them, and is still able to find time to be with her husband. The average American husband makes a confidante and a companion of his wife. . . ." ⁴⁶

⁴¹ Edward Dicey, *Six Months in the Federal States* (London, 1863), I, 310.

⁴² Foster Barham Zincke, *Last Winter in the United States* (London, 1868), pp. 70-71.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴⁴ A. M. Low, *America at Home* (London, 1905), p. 74.

⁴⁵ William Saunders, *Through the Light Continent* (London, 1879), pp. 399-400. Also enlightening on these leveling tendencies in the home are J. Nelson Fraser, p. 246 and Harold Spender, *A Briton in America* (London, 1921), pp. 253-54.

⁴⁶ Low, p. 82.

The patriarchies and matriarchies of the past had been replaced by a family team composed of equals. The British perceived this family revolution as being directly parallel to the fundamental cultural difference between the New World which blurred distinctions and the Old which honored and preserved them. As Muirhead put it: "The reason—or at any rate one reason—of the normal attitude of the American parent towards his child is not far to seek. It is almost undoubtedly one of the direct consequences of the circumambient spirit of democracy. The American is so accustomed to recognize the essential equality of others that he sometimes carries a good thing to excess. . . . The present child may be described as one of the experiments of democracy."⁴⁷

Americans enthroned their children not merely out of blind obedience to some social ethos which compelled them to do in the home something consonant with what the nation proclaimed to the world as its faith. Americans, as Zincke's story of the singing father and son so nicely shows, were often quite fond of their children, and rather than being harried or intimidated, they were not infrequently joyful parents. In fact, the Americans, according to the British, believed in their young ones in much the same way that they believed in their future. Let the youths' natural spirit triumph and they would not only participate in a grand future, but they would be the chief forgers of that future; the child was the future. Children could be heard as well as seen because they represented hope in "the land of youth." "Nowhere," said Muirhead, "is the child so constantly in evidence; nowhere are his wishes so carefully consulted; nowhere is he allowed to make his mark so strongly on society in general."⁴⁸ Richard DeBary chimed in that "America is wholly convinced . . . that the young child can take it all in. The child is given kingship and becomes the king."⁴⁹

Those few Englishmen who thought well of American children praised precisely the same qualities which the detractors abominated. Arnold Bennett, for example, came across one "captivating creature whose society I enjoyed at frequent intervals throughout my stay in America. . . . [She] was a mirror in which I saw the whole American race of children—their independence, their self-confidence, their adorable charm, and their neat sauciness."⁵⁰ The reformer George Holyoake liked "the Ameri-

⁴⁷ Muirhead, pp. 70-71. ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁴⁹ DeBary, p. 128. "Young America does not sit at the master's feet and worship; it has definite opinions, which it deems as much deserving of hearing as other people's, and it gives them forth with the bold confidence born of youthful inexperience and immaturity," Emily Faithfull, *Three Visits to America* (Edinburgh, 1884), p. 89.

⁵⁰ Arnold Bennett, *Your United States* (New York, 1912), pp. 147-48.

can habit of training their children to independence" more than he did England's "unwise domestic paternalism, which encourages a costly dependence."⁵¹

John Strathesk did not employ the term "precocious" in a deprecating manner when he decided that "the girls and boys of America are very frank, even precocious."⁵² And Sir Philip Gibbs expanded upon this theme. "The children of America," he said, "have the qualities of their nation, simplicity, common sense, and self-reliance. They are not so bashful as English boys and girls, and they are free from the little constraints of nursery etiquette which make so many English children afraid to open their mouths. They are also free entirely from that juvenile snobbishness which is still cultivated in English society, where boys and girls of well-to-do parents are taught to look down with contempt upon children of the poorer classes."⁵³

It may be noticed that the adjectives used to depict the child are similar, whether used in delight or disgust: saucy, self-reliant, wild, spontaneous, immodest, independent, demanding, irreverent. It may furthermore be observed that they bear resemblance to adjectives which some Englishmen thought applicable to the young nation as a whole.⁵⁴ Some visitors also found the terms suitable for characterizing American adults as well.

The blurring of lines between young and old in the New World furnished an invitation to some British writers to caricature both American parents and children. But to Margaret Mead this leveling tendency forms an explicable part of a peculiarly national approach to child-rearing which she has called "third-generation American."⁵⁵ The American child, contends this anthropologist, is expected to traverse a course very different from his father's, and "with this orientation towards a different future for the child comes also the expectation that the child will pass beyond his parents and leave their standards behind him."⁵⁶ Thus "it comes about that American parents lack the sure hand on the rudder which parents in other societies display."⁵⁷ Or, approaching the matter from a different perspective than either the historian Bailyn or Miss Mead, Erik Erikson supports their findings when he writes that "the psychoanalysis of the children of immigrants clearly reveals to what ex-

⁵¹ George Jacob Holyoake, *Among the Americans* (Chicago, 1881), p. 183.

⁵² Strathesk, p. 149.

⁵³ Philip Gibbs, *Land of Destiny* (New York, 1920), p. 88.

⁵⁴ Even Vachell, who told the story of the boy with the bagpipes, had to confess to the "originality, independence, pluck, and perspicuity" of the children (p. 83).

⁵⁵ Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry: An Anthropologist Looks at America* (New York, 1942), p. 45.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

tent they, as the first real Americans in their family, become their parents' cultural parents."⁵⁸

As Erikson and many other psychologists have stressed, the high prestige accorded youth, understandable though it may be considering the abundant resources, the scarcity of labor, the virgin conditions, and the rapid pace of change in the egalitarian New World, is not without cost to Americans. The child himself has to pay a price for his exalted place; the compulsion to achieve, to succeed, can be taxing and perhaps ultimately futile. Unlike his Old World counterpart who begins life with a position of ascribed status which he knows is his own, the American child can never let up.

The society, too, has to pay a price for its cult of youth. It is paid not only in the primitive music, the puerile television and the domestic tyranny to which the adult world is exposed at the command of teenagers, and to which the adults meekly succumb. It is paid also in the sacrifice of wisdom, of standards, of permanence, of serenity under the frantic injunction to constantly "think young." The quiet contemplation of the past and the present is sacrificed when all must worship at the altar of the future.

The most repeated consensus at which the travelers arrived concerning the "American character" was that that character resembled, at heart, the character of a child. If there were no childlike children, if there were only miniature adults in "the land of youth," then the reverse was equally true—there were few adultlike adults; there were only adults trying to be young. "There are no old in America at all," said George Steevens in 1900.⁵⁹ By this he meant two things. First, that adult virtues are uncultivated in the New World; the American "retains all his life a want of discipline, an incapacity for ordered and corporate effort."⁶⁰

Steevens' second meaning centered on the fate of those who were actually aged. "They are shouldered unmercifully out of existence," he claimed. "I found in New York a correspondence on the open question whether the old have any right to respect. Many of the public thought, quite seriously, they had no right even to existence."⁶¹

The dearest price of all is paid neither by the children nor by the society but by the adults who have to be "boys" at the office, who as parents must "live for their children," who as mature women must forever look and act like eighteen-year-olds, who as elderly must join the other aged

⁵⁸ Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (2nd ed.; New York, 1963), p. 294.

⁵⁹ George Steevens, p. 314.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 314.

in some zippy retirement community quarantined from the rest of mankind.

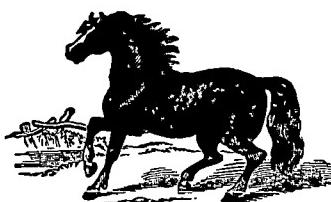
The cult of youth has perhaps permitted a more spontaneous family life to develop, and it has, no doubt, lent to our national life a special vigor and freshness. But in exalting childhood and early youth to the consummatory positions in life, it follows that maturity and old age should become anti-climactic. Indeed, in America, as one ages, one declines, and the reward of lower movie admission fees for "senior citizens" furnishes rather ineffectual solace. One can only guess at the extent to which the American fixation on the earlier stages of the life cycle is related to our tendency to deny the reality of old age and to put from our minds all thoughts of death. And it is not possible to do more here than to raise the question which then becomes inescapable: what kinds of spiritual reserves might this habit of mind take from the individual as he passes through life?⁶²

Thirty years after his 1869 visit to America, the Rev. Mr. Macrae returned and noted that the "independence and precocious intellect of the American children" had not diminished; but he was "less struck with these features this time."⁶³ The reason he was less struck was precisely the same that made Harold Spender think better of the American children in 1920, twenty years after *his* first visit. "Our English child in the interval," said Spender, substituting his native land for Macrae's Scotland, "has become a little more American."⁶⁴ By the early years of the twentieth century, America's startling departure in raising children and in inflating the status of the youngsters in the family hierarchy was, like various other American innovations, becoming more general in the Old World also.

⁶² The seeds of the thoughts in the above paragraph, and in many others in this paper, were planted by Richard Hofstadter, both in conversation and in an early draft of an as-yet unpublished article called "Foreign Observers and American Children"—an article from which Professor Hofstadter was kind enough to let me read.

⁶³ David Macrae, *America Revisited and Men I Have Met* (Glasgow, 1908), p. 24.

⁶⁴ Harold Spender, p. 271.



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Millenarian Scholarship in America

IN 1952, IRA V. BROWN, ONE OF THE FEW STUDENTS OF THE SUBJECT, COULD refer to the millenarian tradition in America as "among the most neglected themes in the history of American thought":

It is a striking commentary [he said] on the tendency of historians to read the assumptions and interests of their own day into the thought of past generations that this strand in the fabric of American thought has been so generally ignored by modern scholars.¹

Fortunately, the conditions lamented by Mr. Brown in 1952 no longer persist. The appearance in the past decade of a number of studies in social and religious history emphasizing the importance of the idea of the imminent millennium has made it seem especially timely for a discussion of that subject with reference to its impact in America.

I refer specifically to such studies as Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (1957), which is already something of a classic in millennial interpretations of the Middle Ages; Ernest Tuveson's *Millennium and Utopia* (1949), which explores the relation of seventeenth-century millennial theory and political activity to the idea of progress; Charles Sanford's *The Quest for Paradise* (1961), which applies some of these ideas in a limited way to their embodiment in American themes; Whitney Cross' *The Burned-Over District* (1950), where the idea is examined with reference to a single place and period; Timothy Smith's *Revivalism and Social Reform* (1957), which establishes the fact that millennial expectations were at the inspired center of nineteenth-century sectarian development; George Williams' *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought* (1962), one of the most recent and stimulating studies

¹ "Watchers for the Second Coming: The Millenarian Tradition in America," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXXIX, 441-58.

in the field; and Sylvia Thrupp's *Millennial Dreams in Action* (1962), a convenient collection of recent papers on the subject reflecting the points of view of historians, sociologists and cultural anthropologists.

These works do not exhaust recent scholarly inquiry into the subject of the millennium, but they reflect a definitive recent perspective: they are an impressive demonstration of the fact that recent cultural historians have found the idea a compelling one.²

Perhaps as much as anything else, three impressive bibliographies appearing in the last decade have stimulated American interest in the idea: T. D. Seymour Basset, in collaboration with Egbert and Persons, *Socialism and American Life* (1954); Leroy Edwin Froom, *The Prophetic Faith of our Fathers* (1954), especially Volume IV; and Burr, Smith and Jamison, *A Critical Bibliography of Religion in America* (1961). A survey of these important works suggests two preliminary conclusions: that the idea, as Brown asserted in 1952, held little interest for a surprisingly large number of earlier cultural historians whose impression of the American past has been, to say the least, influential. It has been common until quite recently for students of American civilization to ignore the idea of the millennium completely, or to view it as a singularly unimportant influence in our past, or to regard it snickeringly in a kind of side-show atmosphere as an oddity or freak—as if it were limited to the caricatured eccentricities of the Shakers, the excesses of the Mormons, or the stereotyped frenzies of the Millerites. The word "millennium" itself evokes a kind of scorn, as connoting a kind of hopeless, utopian enthusiasm.

The second and not unrelated fact which becomes strikingly apparent upon a survey of these recent studies is that the idea of the millennium in America has not yet found its historian. The Frontier had its Turner, the Garden its Henry Nash Smith, the American Adam his Lewis, the Wilderness its Williams and Pastoralism its Marx; yet the single idea which in many ways subsumes the others and to some degree accounts

² The present survey is not intended as an essay in bibliography, although unquestionably such a study is needed. I attempt here to call attention to the principal works dealing with millennialism in America, without citing hundreds of "millennialist" books and pamphlets. Constance Rourke, in *Trumpets of Jubilee* (1927), and historian Oliver Elsbree, in *The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America 1790-1815* (1928), were minority voices at the time. They were followed in the thirties by a number of religious and social historians whose works have since become classics, and have in common a recognition of the importance of millennialism in American cultural history. I refer to such historians as H. Richard Niebuhr, Ernest Sutherland Bates, Ralph Henry Gabriel, Perry Miller and Stow Persons. A controversy still rages in theological circles over the distinctions premillennial, postmillennial, amillennial, dispensational and so forth. A summary of positions held, along with a fairly adequate bibliography, may be found in Lorraine Boettner, *The Millennium* (Philadelphia, 1958). The enormous number of contemporary partisan millennial works listed in Boettner dramatizes the need for impartial, or at least "uncommitted" studies of the phenomenon.

for them has lain, until recently, quietly unexamined. Indeed, to take but one example, the idea has sometimes been unnoticed precisely where it might have been. As George Williams says of Henry Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950):

In tracing . . . the conflicting sentiments concerning the pioneer who was at once the scout of civilization and the escapee from culture and in analyzing the contradictory images of the desert beyond Kansas and Nebraska as at once the haunt of lawless half-breeds and the realm which "in the fulness of time will blossom into the fulfillment of its early promise," Smith seems to have been unaware of the millennial elaboration of the biblical garden-desert theme, which [would] have been as much in the minds of the nineteenth-century denizens and interpreters of the wild West as, according to his thesis, the French Physiocratic agrarian theory.³

The view, expressed here in one form by Williams—that millenarianism as a centrally-informing idea in American thought has been overlooked or neglected—is common among recent students of the idea. Consider, for example, Timothy Smith's contention that revivalism, with its overtones of a decidedly millennial program of action, has been studied in the wrong places and for the wrong reasons. Smith charges that secular historians

have paid more attention to bizarre groups like the Shakers, the Mormons, and Millerites than to the Methodists and Baptists. Even Alice Felt Tyler's book, *Freedom's Ferment*, which elaborately illustrates how pious enthusiasm nurtured the spirit of reform, devotes only one chapter to evangelical religion while assigning seven to "cults and utopias." [In short, Smith maintains that] the myth persists that revivalism is but a half-breed child of the Protestant faith, born on the crude frontier, where Christianity was taken captive by the wilderness.⁴

Smith, as well as Whitney Cross in his examination of the wide range of millennially-inspired movements in the Burned-Over District, regards the notion of the millennium as the key to an understanding of our religious and social history.

Nevertheless, George Shepperson is essentially correct, in speaking more recently upon the comparative study of millenarism, to emphasize how "enormously helpful," as he puts it, would be "a synthesis of the various studies that have been made by scholars in various disciplines of

³ Williams, pp. 129-30.

⁴ Smith, p. 79.

American millennial-style movements.”⁵ What I wish to suggest is that the idea of the millennium provides a brilliant range of possibilities for students of American civilization, and one which will not be exhausted for some time. Indeed, the range is so extensive that this paper presumes only to sketch it in broad outline, indicating here and there some aspects of the subject which would seem to require fuller consideration than they have as yet received.

“The original meaning of millennialism,” as Norman Cohn has suggested, “was narrow and precise”:

It referred to the belief held by some Christians on the authority of Revelation XX, 4-6, that after his Second Coming Christ would establish a messianic kingdom on earth and would reign over it for 1000 years before the Last Judgment. [Modern historians, however, have used the term in a larger sense by applying it to] behaviour in a variety of societies, not all of them even nominally Christian. Thus the term “millenarian” or its synonym “millenarism” is customarily used by anthropologists and sociologists and some historians as a convenient label for a particular type of salvationism. •

Cohn regards as millenarian

any religious movement inspired by the phantasy of a salvation which is to be

(a) collective, in the sense that it is to be enjoyed by the faithful as a group;

(b) terrestrial, in the sense that it is to be realized on this earth and not in some otherworldly heaven;

(c) imminent, in the sense that it is to come both soon and suddenly;

(d) total, in the sense that it is utterly to transform life on earth, . . . [and]

(e) accomplished by agencies which are consciously regarded as supernatural.⁶

I would add to this definition one qualification particularly relevant to any discussion of American movements: the difference between pre- and post-millennialism. Premillennialists suppose that Christ's appearance is necessary before the thousand years of peace can begin. Fiery and cata-

⁵ “The Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements,” in *Millennial Dreams in Action*, ed. Sylvia Thrupp (The Hague, 1962), p. 70.

⁶ “Medieval Millenarism . . .,” in Thrupp, p. 31. Cohn’s term “millenarism,” although not generally accepted, has the advantage of being two syllables shorter than millenarianism, but on the other hand, both millennialism and millenarianism justifiably evoke the Latin roots in a way that the newer coinage does not.

clysmic events will usher in his reign. Postmillennialists, in contrast, conceive of the millennium as a new golden age in history which will prepare the way for Christ's coming and for the descent of the New Jerusalem upon some specifically local place: say, Roxbury, Massachusetts, Enfield, New Hampshire or Salt Lake City. Such a distinction is important beyond its narrow theological sense, because in America post-millennialism, as we shall see, was associated with a liberal theology, an optimistic view of man's historical progress, and a fundamental conviction that salvation through works is somehow a possibility at least in the American landscape. Recent scholarship has abundantly made clear that Jonathan Edwards was the first American postmillennialist of stature, and his views, when amplified and redirected in subsequent generations, resulted in what can only be called a radical departure in eschatology. In contrast, the American premillennialist is a conservative in his views of human history and the possibilities of salvation. Only an act of God will bring about the conditions necessary for the commencement of the millennium, and nothing man can do as evangel or missionary will speed the day. Nevertheless, the American premillennialist savored a hope that God would locate the New Jerusalem in this wilderness, that the Elect would not perish but would rule with Christ in the purified territory, and that the time of the end was not only at hand, but calculable.

If these are the marks of millenarianism, as the term is generally understood today, then it will be valuable to review briefly some evidences of this peculiar "phantasy salvation" in the American past. In doing so here, I shall sacrifice the richness of specific detail to the more immediately-relevant consideration of range and continuity.

In the colonial period, the idea of the imminent millennium was vigorously and persuasively urged by John Cotton, Ephraim Huit, Increase Mather, John Davenport, John Eliot, Samuel Sewall, Cotton Mather and Joseph Morgan. Eliot, although by no means the first American colonist to conceive of the notion, is particularly interesting because his view combines the fervor of Fifth-Monarchy-ism with the hopefulness that the New Jerusalem will descend upon American soil. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to interpret his missionary work with the Indians as the practical embodiment of his millennial hopes, which were expressed theoretically in *The Christian Commonwealth* and elsewhere in his writings. Because of his belief that the Indians were descendants of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel, Eliot felt that in converting them, he was raising a dark cloud from the land, and helping to usher in the millennium.

Samuel Sewall, too often understood today as a charming diarist who measured out almonds to Mrs. Winthrop, was the foremost "scholar" of

the idea in the colonies, and his *Phaenomena quaedam Apocalyptic*, far from being the twisted document described by Vernon L. Parrington, was the most complete and reasoned exegesis of millennialism attempted by any seventeenth-century American. Bolstered by an exhaustive scholarship, Sewall's hopes that American soil would be the most likely place for an imminent New Jerusalem were eagerly attended by Cotton Mather, who was directly inspired by them. Mather's interest in the idea expressed in the *Magnalia* of 1702, where he praises John Davenport for his chiliastic insights, would alone suffice to place him in the tradition upheld by his father; but his enthusiastic support of the idea actually grew to the degree that his later works are often primarily devoted to the theme. In *Theopolis Americana* (1710) Mather acknowledges his indebtedness to Sewall, and we learn that this millennial work was first read in Sewall's house! In it Mather argues that America is intended to be the setting for the New Jerusalem. The same theme is developed in *The City of Refuge* (1716), and *India Christiana* (1721), where Mather again acknowledges his debt to Sewall, generally relying upon the millennial theories of Sewall and Eliot concerning the conversion of the American Indians.⁷

Mather's enthusiastic promotion of America as the prophetic locale for the appearance of a millennial paradise undoubtedly inspired Joseph Morgan's *The Kingdom of Basaruah*, published in 1715—a book described by its recent editor, Richard Schlatter, as the first American novel.⁸ Morgan's allegory, drawing upon Bunyan's millennially-oriented "Holy War" for imagery, describes the possibilities of a chiliastic paradise in the North American wilderness.

The legacy of millennialism in its specifically American contexts was inherited in the next generation by Jonathan Edwards. Edwards' speculations were anything but "old-fashioned chiliasm," as Perry Miller has asserted in his biography. C. G. Goen has demonstrated with persuasive scholarship that Edwards saw the seventh age as a "golden age for the church on earth, within history,"⁹ before Christ's return, achieved

⁷ The notion that the American Indians were Jews has its own elaborate history, ably documented in Godbey's *The Lost Tribes* (1930) and elsewhere. I emphasize the peculiar fascination that such a theory held for American thinkers, however, because it was almost always associated with a millennialist view of history. As early as 1650 Thomas Thorowgood's survey of theories about American savages, *Iewes in America*, was published in London. Thorowgood was read in the colonies as well, and his views about the Indians as the Lost Tribes were supported by Eliot, Sewall and Cotton Mather. Subsequent development of this theory is a study in itself, but one of its most curious expressions, relevant to the present article, is in the *Book of Mormon*.

⁸ Joseph Morgan, *The Kingdom of Basaruah, and Three Unpublished Letters*, ed. Richard Schlatter (Cambridge, 1946).

⁹ C. G. Goen, "Jonathan Edwards: A New Departure in Eschatology," *Church History*, XXVIII (1959), 37.

through the ordinary processes of propagating the gospel. Edwards' radical American postmillennialism marks a divergence from Calvinism. Calvin himself "rejected all millennial views as impoverishing, if not destroying, the Christian hope," and more conventionally conceived of God's people as "wandering as pilgrims on the earth until the end of time."¹⁰

Goen maintains that, in accepting as orthodox the Saybrook Platform, Connecticut Congregationalism "embodied for the first time definite millennial presuppositions," and that Edwards "gave full explication to its more radical suggestions."¹¹ Miller's hypothesis that Edwards' consuming interest in Newtonian physics was the source of his millennialism doesn't do "justice to the more obvious evidence," suggests Mr. Goen, that he got his ideas directly from the leading English millennialists Daniel Whitby, Charles Daubury and (especially) Moses Lowman. These men were responsible for an "entirely new pattern of eschatological thought," and predicted a "final glorious age of the Spirit before the end."¹² Although Edwards violently disagreed with other doctrines of some of these men (Whitby, for example, was his arch-enemy in the Arminian Controversy), he was "in complete agreement" with them on the crucial point "concerning the church's golden age within history." Mr. Goen sees Edwards' doctrine of the historical millennium as an "integral part of the optimistic activism which was destined to crown with success the 'errand into the wilderness,'" concluding that it was Jonathan Edwards' "contribution to the radical utopianism which is part of the American tradition."¹³

. Edwards' millennial views were evangelized by Timothy Dwight, Ezra Stiles, Joseph Bellamy, Jonathan Edwards Jr. and Samuel Hopkins. Hopkins' doctrine of general atonement and his millennial dreams resulted in a schism amongst Congregationalists and in the establishment of Andover Theological Seminary. Despite its outwardly orthodox creed and faculty, Andover, with its special brand of "new-light" Calvinism, spawned a generation of influential preachers whose sense of the possibilities of general salvation found expression in the feeling that the millennium was at hand, and who understood it in the context of a regenerated American republic. Thus the ideas of progress, and of American

¹⁰ Goen, pp. 33-34.

¹¹ Goen, p. 34.

¹² Goen, p. 36. Perry Miller's views of Edwards' eschatology, it should be added, apparently changed between his *Jonathan Edwards* (1949) and the final essay of *Errand Into the Wilderness* (1956). Whitby's influence upon Edwards, incidentally, was noted by Froom some years before Goen's article appeared. For extended treatment of the relation of postmillennialism to the new science in England, see Tuveson, op. cit., and Marjorie Hope Nicholson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* (Ithaca, 1959).

¹³ Goen, p. 39.

destiny or "mission," were often inseparably wedded to the organic religious belief in perfectibility, frequently expressed in American terms as the millennium itself by such Andover stalwarts as founder Jedidiah Morse and graduates George Barrell Cheever, Calvin Stowe, Asa Mahan and John Humphrey Noyes. Hopkins was immortalized in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing* (1859). His *Treatise on the Millennium* (1790) was the handbook of a generation of theologians, and Mrs. Stowe was aware of this in characterizing the patriarch as a millennial prophet. The conflict between Aaron Burr and Hopkins developed in the novel suggests that, since Burr's father was a prominent millennialist, Mrs. Stowe wished to portray a subsequent degeneration.¹⁴ Obviously also, the portrait of Hopkins owes a great deal to Mrs. Stowe's sense of her father's lifetime prepossession that the millennium was imminent.¹⁵ Beecher was a postmillennialist, and represents, along with such men as Asa Mahan, Alexander Campbell, Finney, Noyes and Walter Scott, the shift to a hopefulness about human history and progress (esp. American) *not* characteristic of American Calvinists before Edwards. Whereas Cotton Mather envisaged a small company of the Elected Saints raised up during the fiery purification of the land, henceforth to reign with Christ on earth (and probably in America) for one thousand years, Beecher and many of his contemporaries on the revival circuit, inspired by the liberal theology of Nathaniel Taylor at New Haven or by the hopeful theological open-mindedness of Moses Stuart at Andover, saw human history itself as a sign that the millennium was to be a period of peace and prosperity for large numbers of the saved. The anticipated enjoyment of an imminent millennium in America shifted, so to speak, from that of a chosen Elect to that of a broad electorate.

The extent to which the postmillennial idea captured the American imagination after our own and the French Revolutionary Wars, and continued to captivate the popular imagination for the rest of the century, is adequately conveyed in Froom's partisan but immensely valuable study *The Prophetic Faith of Our Fathers*, especially Volumes III and IV. I do not speak of the noticeably eccentric embodiments of the idea in Shakerism, Mormonism and Millerism, but in the generally pervasive atmosphere in which a "hunger for holiness," as Timothy Smith and others have shown, was endlessly satisfied by the promises of the millennial hope. "Revivalism and perfectionism," Smith illustrates vividly,

¹⁴ For Burr's father, see Froom, III, 197-200.

¹⁵ See *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*; Constance Rourke, op. cit. (above, note 2) and Charles H. Foster, "The Genesis of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *The Minister's Wooing*," *New England Quarterly*, XXI (December 1948), 493-517.

became socially volatile only when combined with the doctrine of Christ's imminent conquest of the earth. . . . The most significant millenarian doctrines of the mid-nineteenth century [Smith concludes in his last chapter] were not those of William Miller, but those which grew out of evangelical Protestantism's crusade to Christianize the land. Revivalistic Calvinists like Edward and Henry Ward Beecher and Albert Barnes, Oberlin perfectionists, and Methodists great and small were ardent postmillennialists, bent like John the Baptist on preparing a kingdom for the King."¹⁶

One significant contribution of the 1960 conference on millennial movements held at the University of Chicago was its clear implication that time and place do not limit the idea of the millennium.¹⁷ It antedates the Judeo-Christian tradition; its special characteristics have been recognized in the pre-Christian Cargo-Cults of the South Pacific (with consequent illuminating insight into the practices of missionaries arriving on the scene in the nineteenth century); in early Islamic culture; and in the political contexts of contemporary Nyasaland. The papers stimulated by the conference dramatize the need for a re-examination of conventional interpretations of social movements.

Such a re-examination would be especially helpful in nineteenth-century American social and intellectual history. In this context we are familiar with millenarism because of its connection with certain religiously-inspired communitarian movements, especially in the period 1830-50. The common practice among specialist studies of American social movements of a utopian, communitarian cast has been to place them into one of two rigid categories: religious or secular. Thus Alice Felt Tyler says, "These utopian societies fall into two groups, one drawing its inspiration from the teachings of religion, the other from the ideas of two Old World reformers, Robert Owen and Charles Fourier."¹⁸ The basis of Mrs. Tyler's categories challenges an examination of her assumptions: first, that the ideas of Owen and Fourier were nonreligious; second, that all societies not formed on a religious basis were either Owenite or Fourieristic; and, perhaps most important, that the societies in question were "either-or." The categories, in short, are too neat.

A similar division is evident in Arthur Bestor's *Backwoods Utopias*,¹⁹ although Bestor's treatment of his subject is altogether more sophisti-

¹⁶ Smith, p. 236.

¹⁷ Thrupp, esp. pp. 11-22, for a summary of this conference.

¹⁸ Alice Felt Tyler, *Freedom's Ferment* (Harper Torchbook ed.; New York, 1962), p. 166. In calling Mrs. Tyler's arrangement into question, I do not wish to minimize her pioneer contribution to the scholarship of the millennium in America.

¹⁹ Arthur E. Bestor Jr., *Backwoods Utopias, The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663-1829* (Philadelphia, 1950).

cated and satisfactory. Nevertheless, what Bestor adds to Mrs. Tyler's religious-secular division is essentially a process-in-time, so that we are presented with a schematized order of events in the history of the early movements in which the secular "phase," as Mr. Bestor puts it, emerges from the sectarian phase, which is earlier in our history.

I suggest that, if millenarism is regarded as somewhat more inseparably a part of the fabric of nineteenth-century social thought, and if communitarianism is seen as not so easily divisible into the categories of "either religious or secular," then a re-examination of the nineteenth-century movements ought to be necessary and profitable.

Consider Brook Farm. Largely because of the manner in which it has been described—as a refuge for transcendentalists; as an early experiment in social and economic communism; or as a place which existed to provide a theme for *The Blithedale Romance*—we have often forgotten the specifically-millennial contexts which gave birth to the colony, and which nurtured it in its rebirth into Associationism. Yet George Ripley's biographer, O. B. Frothingham, made the millennial hope the theme of his study of that founder of Brook Farm: "The heavenly Jerusalem was in the clouds, waiting to descend. The believer was justified in the persuasion that the time for its appearing had come. The disciples were gathered; the iniquity of the world was full; the angel had put the trumpet to his lips."²⁰ Elizabeth Peabody's *Dial* article of 1841 triumphantly asserts that the experiment was being undertaken to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The reorganization of society would allow men to "perceive that the day of judgment for society is come, and all the words of Christ are so many trumpets of doom. . . . For each man to think and live [according to her prescribed method of association] is [she says] the Second Coming of Christ."²¹

Miss Peabody is indulging in something more than rhetoric. We know from the Peabody family's shock when Ripley was converted to Fourierism, that they felt he had betrayed his pledge to establish the Kingdom on Earth which *they* had so earnestly hoped for in the early days of the experiment. Elizabeth had earlier dismissed Brisbane's *The Social Destiny of Man*, but we have forgotten that even the "Fourierist" Associationists—Peabodys and Hawthorne to the contrary notwithstanding—persisted in regarding themselves millennially, believing that the phalanx would speed the Coming of Christ and the descent of the New Jerusalem. A millennial expectation was everywhere evident, for example, in the speeches at the 1844 National Convention in New York, where, in Parke

²⁰ O. B. Frothingham, *George Ripley* (Boston, 1882), p. 111.

²¹ Quoted in John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialisms* (Philadelphia, 1870), pp. 110-11.

Godwin's ringing words, Associative unity would be God's manifestation of his Providence: "The Saviour will come according to his word, in 'all the glory of his Father:' it is the Kingdom of Heaven that comes to us in this terrestrial world; it is the reign of Christ; he has conquered evil."²² Here then, it seems to me, is evidence that categories like Mrs. Tyler's fail. The works of Albert Brisbane—the oft-cited but infrequently-studied prophet of Fourierism in this country—are not only religiously inspired, but specifically millennial in drift; and the insistence of the American Associationists themselves that theirs was a uniquely religious version of Fourierism, challenges the easy categories of some of our cultural historians. John Humphrey Noyes, himself a chief prophet of millennialism in this country, was nearer the mark. In the revivals of Edwards, Nettleton and Finney, he said, "the Millennium seemed to be at the door." "Then," he continued,

came Perfectionism, rapidly affirming that the Millennium had already begun. Then came Millerism, reproducing all the excitements and hopes that agitated the Primitive Church just before the Second Advent. Very nearly coincident with the crisis of this last enthusiasm in 1843, came this Fourier revival, with the same confident predictions of the coming of Christ's kingdom.

Noyes maintained, in short, that

all these enthusiasms [were] manifestations, in varied phase, of one great afflatus, that takes its time for fulfillment more leisurely than suits the ardor of its mediums, but inspires them with heart-prophecies of the good time coming, that are true and sure.²³

The only recent student of the conversion of Brook Farm to Fourierism, Charles R. Crowe, emphasizes the passionate intensity behind Ripley's belief that "a Phalanx would inevitably create a Transcendentalist paradise . . . , and be a realization of Fourier's "socialist millennium."²⁴

One need only add, perhaps, as a footnote, that a re-examination of Owenism itself—the other "secular" phase of communitarianism in America—might be valuable in the light of recent studies of millenarism, inasmuch as Owen himself understood his New Lanark experiment as the event which would usher in the millennium; that his *New Moral World* newspaper was subtitled *The Millennium*; and that his early biographer, Podmore, considered him an out-and-out prophet of the mil-

²² Noyes, p. 219.

²³ Noyes, pp. 228-29.

²⁴ "The Unnatural Union of Phalansteries and Transcendentalists," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XX (1959), pp. 498, 502.

lennial hope, by no means either an Atheist or an infidel—which were the labels attached to him by his enemies.

If millenarism is, as recent scholarship persuasively recommends, a centrally-informing concept behind the idea of progress, revolutionary messianism and radical social utopianism, then the American past offers a rich field for the student of the history of the idea. America, as George Shepperson has recently suggested, "is the ideal place for the comparative study of [millennial movements]. Rural and urban; rich, poor and middling; white, Indian and negro; 'advanced' and 'primitive' peoples; orthodox and heretic: all the various elements which go to make up these movements, and whose exact proportion in them is in dispute, are here."²⁵

Consequently, in conclusion, I want to suggest five areas which would profit from review in the light of recent millenarian scholarship.

First, in the colonial period, the evidence suggests that a revisionist history of America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries would be helpful which fully takes into account the illuminating studies of Tuveson, Cohn, Miller and Williams, and which consequently would undertake to interpret the history of the early period with regard to the widely held conviction that America was, or might soon be, the New Jerusalem: a legacy which richly pervaded the final hopes and historical conclusions of Jonathan Edwards. Granted that historians have been aware of the tendency of the early colonists to identify themselves with the chosen people of Israel, it is now time to understand that identification in the light of recent scholarship of the millennium. We need not even regard Edwards as the starting point for postmillennialism in America: the beginning may be seen in the hopeful expectations of Sewall, Cotton Mather, Morgan and others.

Second, in the nineteenth century, it would be helpful to have a thorough re-examination of the commonly held proposition that the sectarian communities degenerated into various forms of the secular, becoming Marxian and backwoodsy at the same time. Until the long-awaited study of American Fourierism promised by Professor Bestor appears, our knowledge of the movement and of its American prophet Brisbane, is noticeably slim. Yet all of the available information on Brisbane suggests that his writings and activities diverge from those of his master precisely at the stage of his religious commitment, and consequently Brisbane should receive an up-to-date and thoroughgoing treatment.

²⁵ Thrupp, p. 52.

Of special value, also, while we are on the subject of the utopian communities, would be a study of the innumerable American Prophet-leaders whose consuming hope was overwhelmingly millennial. No first-rate counterpart to Norman Cohn's brilliant examination of the medieval chiliastic prophets has yet appeared. We also have had our Drummers of Niklashausen and our Thomas Müntzers; but no recent chronicle of the phantasies which drove them in pursuit of the American millennium exists. An illuminating hypothesis of "disconfirmation" suggested by sociologists Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken and Stanley Schachter, in *When Prophecy Fails* (1956), might be amplified through research into other aspects of the lives of prophetic leaders in our past. For example, just as Mrs. Marion Keech had her promoter in Dr. Armstrong, so also have some of the great American prophets reluctantly been aided by promoters and publicists: Parley Pratt in the case of Joseph Smith, Joshua Himes in William Miller's case, and so on.

Third, it would be timely to have a comprehensive study of millennial assumptions about history itself: something which might be termed "the vision of eschatology." Considerable scholarship has already taken place in this field; I refer, for example, to Tuveson, to Rudolf Bultmann's *History and Eschatology*, to Ray C. Petrie's *Christian Eschatology and Social Thought* and to Professor Slaate's recent book, *Time and its End*. Such a study would synthesize a number of concepts about American destiny (manifest or otherwise) and "mission," a question that has recently interested Professor Frederick Merk.²⁶ It would continue the inquiry into the perennial image of the continent as a garden blooming in the midst of the desert. Leo Marx, in *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), continues in the tradition of *Virgin Land*, and makes the picture even more distinct through his description of the "middle landscape" of pastoral, and George Williams' *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought* acts as a corrective and sequel to *Virgin Land*. But there is much that needs to be done to amplify recent insights which suggest that the garden of the world is more significantly the navel of the world.

Fourth, in literary criticism: R. W. B. Lewis' *The American Adam* approaches our subject in its attention to a single related theme, but the millennial image in our literature remains for the most part, a curiously unexamined phenomenon. I do not refer merely to *curiosa* such as Wigglesworth's *The Day of Doom*, but, in the nineteenth century to a consideration of such images as "Poe's Earthly Paradise," as Robert D. Jacobs has described it in a recent study;²⁷ in the twentieth to the garden-desert

²⁶ Frederick Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History* (New York, 1963).

²⁷ *American Quarterly*, XII (1960), 404-13.

theme in Eliot (a scrutiny brilliantly suggested in Williams); and in the "Figures for an Apocalypse" of Thomas Merton at the one extreme, and Robert Lowell on the other.

In the novel, the ramifications are endless. Beginning, perhaps, with Hawthorne and his growing dissatisfaction with visionary reformers, we would profit from a reconsideration of connections between "millennium and utopia" in such works as Mrs. Stowe's already mentioned; in the cluster of utopian fantasies appearing in the late 1880s and early 1890s, including *Looking Backward*, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and Ignatius Donnelly's millennial novels *Caesar's Column* and *The Golden Bottle*; in two novels of the West virtually unread today: Eggleston's *The End of the World* and Howells' last successful work, *The Leatherwood God*, based upon the reported activities of one of the most colorful of the millennial prophets, Joseph Dylks.²⁸

"American Reform Literature," as Charles Sanford has suggested recently in an article by that title, offers another region not yet fully explored with regard to its religious imagery. In speaking of *The Grapes of Wrath*, Sanford suggests that "Preacher Casey symbolically realizes . . . the millennial hope of the American Puritans of Christ's Second Coming to the blessed new land. Casey is a second Christ resurrected from the American soil."²⁹

Although George Williams has clearly suggested the millennial presuppositions behind the Biblical garden-wilderness theme in our literature, another image in this context well worth exploring in more detail is that of mountains. Two recent studies of the aesthetic theory of the sublime have shown its connection with apocalypticism and millennialism. I refer to Marjorie Hope Nicholson's *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory* (1959), and James Nelson's *Sublime Puritan, Milton among the Victorians* (1964). There is every reason to suspect that American paintings of sublime scenery, as well as literary descriptions of our Western mountains and the mountain men, furnished yet another outlet for an expression of the apocalyptic vision.

Finally, we need to examine more fully than we have the manifestations of millenarism in the perversities of the Nativist movement, and in the "Kingdom" theory of the Holy Civil War which pervaded the thinking of certain Abolitionists such as Noyes, Cheever, Weld, Garrison and the Beechers—a study admirably begun by Timothy Smith, and suggested by the conclusions of *Patriotic Gore*, Thomas' biography of Garrison, and elsewhere. In discussing the post-Civil War developments of

²⁸ See R. H. Taneyhill, "The Leatherwood God," in *Ohio Valley Historical Series Miscellanies* (Cincinnati, 1871).

²⁹ *American Quarterly*, X (1958), 309.

this creed, as it merged with the Social Gospel and the Kingdom philosophies of the latter part of the century, Daniel Day Williams' *The Andover Liberals* (1941), and Elmer T. Clark's *The Small Sects in America* (1937)³⁰ are excellent, as are the individual essays by Stow Persons and Leland Jamison in their respective works; but much more study by impartial secular historians would place in their respective millennial settings George D. Herron and the Kingdom movement; Charles T. Russell, Millennial-Dawnism and the Jehovah's Witnesses (with consequences for Muslim eschatology); and the Seventh-Day Adventists. Two other millennially-inspired churches, the Disciples and the Mormons, despite considerable treatment in recent years, are also interesting in this particular regard precisely because they too are "native" American religions. It should be recalled, for example, that the early publicists of Joseph Smith as millennial prophet—Parley Pratt and Sidney Rigdon—were themselves apostate millennial Campbellites.

The studies in the idea of the millennium which I have described here can be neither parochial nor provincial; millenarism has never been confined within our own borders. However, viewed from the perspective here sketched in outline, the subject ought to be at this juncture pre-eminently a fruitful one for investigation by students of American Civilization.

³⁰ No attempt is made here to catalogue the numerous histories of the small sects and cults, which are adequately surveyed in Burr, Smith and Jamison.



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Coming of Age in America: Young Ben Franklin and Robin Molineux

WHEN I FIRST READ "MY KINSMAN, MAJOR MOLINEUX" I ASSUMED THAT Hawthorne had been influenced by *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, especially by the twenty or so pages dealing with the period between Franklin's arrival in Philadelphia at the age of seventeen and his ill-advised voyage to England thirteen months later. Such an influence was chronologically possible: Hawthorne wrote "Molineux" sometime in 1828-29,¹ and in October and November of 1828 he borrowed the first five of the six volumes of Franklin's *Works* from the Salem Athenaeum.² This suggests more than a passing interest in Franklin on the part of Hawthorne during the time he was composing his story. I was surprised to find, however, that outside of Daniel G. Hoffman, no one, apparently, has studied or commented upon the similarities between the experiences of young Franklin and the story of Robin Molineux. In *Form and Fable in American Fiction* Professor Hoffman discusses Franklin and Robin, but separately. Only once, and then casually, does he link the two: "Robin is on the threshold of metamorphosis, like young Ben Franklin walking up Market Street with a loaf of bread under his arm."³ There are many other resemblances, some superficial, and some dealing in a complex and sophisticated manner with that major requirement of the American Dream—the necessity of change, of moving away from one's father's home, of advancing in the world on one's own merits and

¹ This date is ascribed as "the probable or certain date of composition" by Elizabeth Lathrop Chandler, "A Study of the Sources of the Tales and Romances Written by Nathaniel Hawthorne before 1853," *Smith College Studies in Modern Languages*, VII (July 1926), 55.

² (Philadelphia, 1809-18). Volume I contains the *Autobiography*.

³ (New York, 1961), p. 114.

shrewdness. But young Franklin and Robin both pass through a nightmare before they learn this.⁴

On the superficial level of resemblance, Franklin's early career in Philadelphia and Robin's adventures in "the little metropolis of a New England colony" take place at roughly the same time in American history; Ben and Robin are shrewd, manly youths who are the same age. Each leaves his father's house to go to a strange city in search of advancement; each arrives in this strange city by boat; each is embarrassed about his lack of money; each is in danger of being arrested for having run away from his master. Both encounter and resist strumpets, and both fall asleep or "dream" in or near places of worship. Some of these incidents might occur in almost any story about the adventures of a young man in colonial America, but the large number of superficial correspondences (I have not even noted them all) and the fact that they occur in roughly the same order and context, suggest that they are not accidental. On a more significant level, Ben—I use the diminutive to distinguish him from the mature Franklin—and Robin desire to be exalted over their peers, and in this desire, contrary to the democratic ideals of the new country, they seek to link their fates and careers to royal officials; both are humiliated by the sudden revelation that their hopes in these officials were ill-founded; and both, out of their humiliation, learn the lesson of self-reliance.

Young Franklin and Robin are in some way confronted with the problem of finding a place in the world. In Franklin's case, the problem was to escape an unattractive trade. His father was a tallow chandler and soap boiler, and young Franklin feared that he would have to become a candle and soap maker as well. Franklin Senior realized his son was more inclined to run away to sea than to make candles, so he had Ben bound in apprenticeship to one of his older sons, James, a printer. Because Robin Molineux's older brother is in line to inherit their father's farm, it is arranged that Robin will go to town to live with his wealthy uncle. Thus, both lads are thrown out of the paternal nest, but not far.

"'I have the name of being a shrewd youth,'" brags Robin at one point, but Robin is no match in shrewdness for young Franklin. Any reader of the *Autobiography* is immediately struck by the shrewdness of

⁴ In *Biographical Stories for Children*, published in 1842, Hawthorne summarizes the lesson to be learned from Franklin's life: "Ben . . . gained wisdom by experience; for it was one of his peculiarities, that no incident ever happened to him without teaching him some valuable lesson. Thus he generally profited more by his misfortunes than many people do by the most favorable events that could befall them." See *The Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne* (Boston, 1883), XII, 190.

the sixteen-year-old lad who, after teaching himself to argue and write effectively, began to publish anonymous essays and articles in his brother's paper (they had to be anonymous, for James Franklin would not have printed them, at least not at first, had he known Ben wrote them). Soon after this, Ben became editor and publisher of the paper when his brother was thrown into jail because one of the youth's pieces had given offense to the Assembly. Finally, Ben shrewdly tricked his brother into releasing him from apprenticeship and left his native Boston to find a printing job elsewhere. And thus he came to Philadelphia.

Robin, "barely eighteen," arrives in his uncle's town at more or less the same time, 1720 or 1730 or thereabouts, as the seventeen-year-old Franklin arrived in Philadelphia. Franklin arrived by boat at eight or nine o'clock on a Sunday morning in October 1723; Robin arrives by ferry "upon a summer night, not far from a hundred years ago. . . . near nine o'clock of a moonlight evening." Franklin's arrival was real and could thus take place at any time, but Robin, as his name and the reference to the "Moonshine of Pyramus and Thisbe" suggest, is embarking on a Midsummer Night's Dream. Although Franklin reached Philadelphia by day, it was only after a night of doubt on the river: "about Midnight not having yet seen the City, some of the Company were confident we must have pass'd it, and would row no farther, the others knew not where we were."⁵ Franklin's nocturnal confusions before reaching Philadelphia adumbrate the dark wanderings of Robin in nighttown.

Hawthorne seems to have been heavily influenced by the paragraph in the *Autobiography* in which Franklin describes himself as he stepped from the boat onto the Market Street wharf at Philadelphia in order that the reader might "compare such unlikely Beginnings with the Figure I have since made there. I was in my Working Dress, my best Cloaths being to come round by Sea. . . ." Robin is dressed in work clothes, or at least clothes suitable to the country, not the city. Franklin carried his extra shirts and stockings in his pockets, whereas Robin bears a "wallet" over his shoulder. Although, under the circumstances, it is to be expected that both lads should be tired, hungry and short of money, it is worth noting that we are told at the same point exactly how much money each youth has. Franklin: "my whole Stock of Cash consisted of a Dutch Dollar and about a Shilling in Copper. The latter I gave to the People of the Boat for my Passage." Hawthorne: "Robin . . . drew from his

⁵ All quotations from Franklin are from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, eds. Leonard W. Labaree *et al.* (New Haven, 1964), pp. 73-95. Because I have quoted frequently from the *Autobiography* and "Molineux," I have not documented individual quotations.

pocket the half of a little province bill of five shillings, which . . . did but satisfy the ferryman . . . [and] three pence." Franklin tells us that he was overly generous when he paid the boatmen because he had almost no money and was afraid "of being thought to have but little." Hawthorne echoes Franklin's account of his embarrassment when he tells us that Robin "could not help lowering his voice" when he confesses his lack of funds to the innkeeper.

Ben and Robin are completely alone in their new cities and are in danger of being arrested or seduced. When Franklin entered Philadelphia he "knew no Soul, nor where to look for Lodging." Robin "knew not whither to direct his steps." Franklin "cut so miserable a Figure" that while he was eating his first meal in an inn, "several sly Questions were ask'd me, as it seem'd to be suspected from my youth and Appearance, that I might be some Runaway [apprentice]." When Robin goes into an inn to inquire the way to his uncle's dwelling, the innkeeper seemingly ignores Robin's question and indirectly accuses him of being a runaway "bounden servant." On a second voyage from Boston to Philadelphia, about seven months after his first trip, young Franklin met two very friendly young women aboard ship: "When we arriv'd at New York, they told me where they liv'd, and invited me to come and see them." But a friendly Quakeress had warned Ben that they were "very bad Women" and he avoided them. "And it was well I did: For the next Day, the Captain miss'd a Silver Spoon and some other Things . . . and knowing that these were a Couple of Strumpets, he got a Warrant to search their Lodgings, found the stolen Goods, and had the Thieves punish'd." Robin, too, has a close call. He is about to enter the house of the young woman in the scarlet petticoat when the night watchman appears and threatens him with the stocks. Thus, both lads, with help, avoid the sensual fall and thereby save themselves from punishment.

As they wander without direction the young men encounter well-dressed strollers and make their way to "churches" which offer temporary refuge of one kind or another. Franklin, in his ramblings, walked up a street with "many clean dress'd People in it who were all walking the same Way." Robin finds himself "in a spacious street" where he discovers "people promenading on the pavement. . . . many gay and gallant figures." Franklin followed the "clean dress'd People" until he came to a Quaker meeting-house where he "fell fast asleep." Robin does not enter a meeting-house, but he does look through the window of a church; he does not fall asleep, but he does lose himself in memories of home until "his thoughts had become visible and audible in a dream." Years later, in *Biographical Stories for Children*, in the section on Franklin's childhood, Hawthorne devoted a single paragraph to the adventures of Franklin

after he left his father's home; half of the paragraph is given over to speculation about whether, or of what, Franklin dreamed when he fell asleep in the Quaker meeting-house: "He has not told us whether his slumbers were visited by any dreams, but it would have been a strange dream, indeed, and an incredible one, that should have foretold how great a man he was destined to become, and how much he would be honored in that very city where he was now friendless and unknown."⁶ Franklin slept in the meeting-house until "the Meeting broke up, when one was kind enough to rouse me." Robin seems almost to dream through the procession, another kind of "meeting," in which he sees his uncle, until the kindly gentleman "wakes" him up by inquiring, "'Well, Robin, are you dreaming?'"

A more complicated and particular similarity between these two narratives involves relationships between the two lads and royal officials. Curiously, we are never told Major Molineux's civic rank, but Hawthorne's historical "preface" to "Molineux" deals with the relations between the royally appointed colonial governors and the colonists. Apparently it would not serve Hawthorne's purpose to make Major Molineux the royal governor, for Robin's search would not have been at all plausible had he been looking for the governor; surely almost everyone in the city would know the location of the governor's residence, and Robin's search would become far more surrealistic than it is. Perhaps this is the reason why Hawthorne concludes his discussion of the problems of the royal governors by appending a broader statement about the victims of the colonists' dissatisfaction: "The inferior members of the court party, in times of high political excitement, led scarcely a more desirable life." But why did Hawthorne feel it necessary even to bother to discuss the problems of the governors if he did not intend to make Robin's uncle a governor? The answer may come in a study of young Franklin's dealings with Sir William Keith, governor of the province of Pennsylvania, who promised Franklin much and gave him nothing. Basically, Governor Keith and Major Molineux are alike in that Benjamin and Robin expect much from them and are only led to humiliation and sorrow by their great expectations, great expectations growing out of a fault common to each youth: each thinks well of himself and is thus susceptible to flattery.

Hawthorne's portrayal of Robin's pride in his uncle's rank and reputation and his adolescent anxiety to have some of his uncle's fame spread to him, along with his proud mouthing of the pompously allitera-

⁶ Hawthorne, *Works*, XII, 201.

tive "my kinsman, Major Molineux," all seem foreshadowed in young Franklin's relationship to his false patron, Governor Keith. Franklin's account of his first meeting with Keith may have supplied Hawthorne with a source for Robin's naive anticipation of the magic his uncle's name will work. Robin and Franklin are Cinderellas. Franklin, for instance, writes wonderfully of the same kind of dramatic reversal of fortune that Robin expects as soon as he meets someone with a proper regard for the name of his uncle: one day Franklin and Keimer, his employer,

saw the Governor and another Gentleman . . . come directly across the Street to our House, and heard them at the Door. Keimer ran down immediately, thinking it a Visit to him. But the Governor enquir'd for me, came up, and with a Condescension and Politeness I had been quite unus'd to, made me many Compliments, desired to be acquainted with me, blam'd me kindly for not having made myself known to him when I first came to the Place, and would have me away with him to the Tavern. . . . I was not a little surpriz'd, and Keimer star'd like a Pig poison'd.

Franklin later learned that the governor thought he "appear'd a young Man of promising Parts, and therefore should be encouraged: The Printers at Philadelphia were wretched ones, and if I would set up there, he made no doubt I should succeed; for his Part, he would procure me the publick Business, and do me every other Service in his Power." This, of course, reminds one of the visit, "in great pomp," of Major Molineux to Robin's home during which the Major promised to advance Robin, who "seemed to be rather the favorite," if he would come live with him in the city. Because the Major is rich, important and childless, this invitation amounts to a promise of future greatness for Robin. The problem is that Ben and Robin forsake the democratic ideal of making their own way in the world, and rely on the material bounty of older men, men who are also representatives of an older and increasingly oppressive order.

It should be noted, however, that neither Major Molineux nor Governor Keith is treated as a bad man per se. Major Molineux is "an elderly man, of large and majestic person, and strong, square features, betokening a steady soul"; his tar and feathering is "the foul disgrace of a head grown gray in honor." Franklin managed to attain an objective and charitable attitude toward Keith:

But what shall we think of a Governor's playing such pitiful Tricks, and imposing so grossly on a poor ignorant Boy! It was a Habit he had acquired. He wish'd to please every body; and having little to give, he

gave Expectations. He was otherwise an ingenious sensible Man, a pretty good Writer, and a good Governor for the People, tho' not for his Constituents the Proprietaries, whose Instructions he sometimes disregarded. Several of our best Laws were of his Planning, and pass'd during his Administration.

The point, I assume, is that neither Hawthorne nor Franklin is interested in showing royal officials in a bad, or totally bad light, for both writers desire to point out that the young men are partly at fault for what happens to them.

Both young men encounter ambiguous and puzzling obstacles when they try to take up the older men on their promises. Governor Keith warned Ben to keep his patronage a secret from everyone, and soon suggested that Franklin travel to England to select a new press and equipment himself. Although the governor was friendly, he seemed very casual about making good his promise—but then what can one expect from a very important, very busy man?

The Governor, seeming to like my Company, had me frequently to his House; and his Setting me up was always mention'd as a fix'd thing. I was to take with me Letters recommendatory to a Number of his Friends, besides the Letter of Credit to furnish me with the necessary Money for purchasing the Press and Types, Paper, &c. For these Letters I was appointed to call at different times, when they were to be ready, but a future time was still named. Thus we went on till the Ship whose Departure too had been several times postponed was on the Point of sailing. Then when I call'd to take my Leave and Receive the Letters, his Secretary . . . came out to me and said the Governor was extremely busy, in writing, but would be down at Newcastle before the Ship, and there the Letters would be delivered to me.

On the day of sailing, the governor was indeed in Newcastle, but when Franklin applied for his letters of credit, the governor's "Secretary came to me from him with the civillest Message in the World, that he could not then see me being engag'd in Business of the utmost Importance; but should send the Letters to me on board, wish'd me heartily a good Voyage and a speedy Return, &c. I return'd on board, a little puzzled, but still not doubting." And so it goes, incredibly, until Franklin, believing the governor had included letters for him in the captain's mail bag, arrived in England where he found there were no letters for him, and never had been.

Just as Franklin was led about by the nose and put off by Governor Keith, Robin is put off again and again in his search for his uncle. At first he is put off by threats and laughter or the seductive lies of the girl in

the scarlet petticoat, until he is told, finally, by a very strange looking man, " 'Watch here for an hour, and Major Molineux will pass by.' " And, of course, Major Molineux does pass, but in tar and feathers, and Robin knows all his hopes and dreams about advancing with the aid of his uncle are lost.

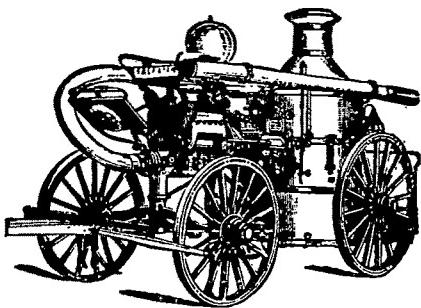
But all is not lost, for in each case an older and wiser man witnesses the youth's disillusionment and shame and points optimistically to the possibilities of the future, if the youth will but trust in himself and his own talents—and out of apparent failure comes the promise of future good. When Franklin discovered that Governor Keith had not sent the letters of credit, he put the whole affair before a Quaker merchant named Denham whose friendship he had contracted aboard ship.⁷ Denham "let me in to Keith's Character, told me there was not the least Probability that he had written any Letters for me; that no one who knew him had the smallest Dependance on him." Franklin asked the older man what he should do, and Denham "advis'd me to endeavour getting some Employment in the Way of my Business. Among the Printers here, says he, you will improve yourself; and when you return to America, you will set up to greater Advantage." Thus ends Franklin's account of his dealings with Governor Keith; what follows in the *Autobiography* is the proof of the accuracy of Denham's prophecy. By extension we can speculate that Hawthorne means Robin can or will rise on his own when we see the friendly, frank, mature and knowledgeable gentleman who stands beside Robin during the nocturnal procession give Robin the choice of running back home or making the best of his native talents: " 'Some few days hence, if you wish it, I will speed you on your journey. Or, if you prefer to remain with us, perhaps, as you are a shrewd youth, you may rise in the world without the help of your kinsman, Major Molineux.' "

John Krumplemann, in "Hawthorne's 'Young Goodman Brown' and Goethe's *Faust*,"⁸ shows how Hawthorne seems to have used Goethe's words in composing that story. "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" and "Young Goodman Brown" were written about the same time, 1828-29, and deal with the same themes: a young man's encounter with evil, or

⁷ Franklin's *Autobiography* is full of appreciative references to the Quakers or "Friends." As I have already mentioned, Ben rested in a Quaker meeting-house, he was warned away from two strumpets by a Quakeress, and the Quaker Denham set him right concerning the past and future. Perhaps Hawthorne is punning on the short name for the Society of Friends when he has Robin, after witnessing the procession, ironically thank the kind stranger and "my other friends." Robin is referring to the people he first mistook for enemies, who, like the Friends of Franklin's *Autobiography*, have helped him along the road to enlightenment.

⁸ *Die Neueren Sprachen*, Heft XI (1956), 516-21.

what appears to be evil, and his need to free himself from his father. It is not surprising that Hawthorne, who was twenty-four or twenty-five at the time, and who had led a fairly quiet and blameless life, if we discount undergraduate lapses from virtue, should find it helpful to turn to an older and more experienced writer, Goethe, when he came to investigate man's relation to evil. Likewise, the tone and humor of "Molineux" suggest a wiser, more self-confident and less self-conscious man than we would expect Hawthorne to be at, let us say, twenty-five, or even thirty-five for that matter. It is highly suitable that "Young Goodman Brown," which deals with very human and international themes, should find one of its major sources in the very human and very international story of Faust; it is just as suitable that "Molineux," which rings a particularly nationalistic and American change on these themes, should find part of its inspiration in that seminal study of young America coming of age, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*.



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Andrew Wyeth and the Transcendental Tradition

ON THE LAST DAY OF FEBRUARY, IN 1860, HENRY DAVID THOREAU WATCHED in amused and musing admiration a little boy wearing a woodchuck-skin cap. Remarking to the boy on the cap's warmth, Thoreau recorded how the boy's "black eyes sparkled, even as the woodchuck's might have done."¹ Some seventy-five years later one of Thoreau's disciples, the artist N. C. Wyeth, illustrated an edition of selections from Thoreau's journals, and chose this encounter as one of the scenes to recreate in oils.² Some sixteen years later his son, Andrew Wyeth, painted another picture, of another boy, his son, in another fur cap.³ Each picture, from Thoreau's word-miniature to Andrew Wyeth's portrait of Jamie might be dismissed as quaint trivia of Americana were it not for Thoreau's observation that "Such should be the history of every piece of clothing that we wear."⁴ From woodchuck's garment to boy's fur cap was no great leap for Thoreau, so long as there were an honest and consistent continuity between the wild and the domestic; so long as there were unity of nature and man, the transcendental unity which becomes the "organic principle" in the design of Louis Sullivan, the architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright, the city planning theory of Lewis Mumford, the poetry of Walt Whitman and Robert Frost and the painting of Andrew Wyeth.

The fountainhead for this creative tradition is, of course, Ralph Waldo Emerson, whose abstract dicta provided the impetus for these Americans

¹ *Men of Concord and Some Others as Portrayed in the Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, ed. Francis H. Allen, illustrated by N. C. Wyeth (Boston, 1936), p. 239.

² *Ibid.*, plate X.

³ *Reader's Digest*, Jan. 1964, p. 168 (reprinted from *Woman's Day*, Aug. 1963). Other color reproductions of paintings referred to in this essay and the periodicals in which they appear are: *Horizon*, Sept. 1961, pp. 89-96, "Albert's Son," "Karl," "Tenant Farmer," "Ground Hog Day," "Nicky," "Young America" and "River Cove"; *Time*, Dec. 27, 1963, pp. 46-49, "Trodden Weed," "Northern Point," "Distant Thunder," "Christina's World"; *Art in America*, Winter 1958-59, p. 23, "Corner of the Woods"; *Studio*, Apr. 1959, p. 121, "Chambered Nautilus" (in black and white); *Studio*, Dec. 1960, p. 206, "Raccoon."

⁴ *Men of Concord*, p. 239.

to look for inspiration in the natural objects and common men of America. The danger of misinterpretation and abusive application of the Emersonian principles appears right at the source, for it is not always easy for either artist or audience to distinguish between works which are quaint, picturesque, or even chauvinistic and sentimental, and those works which exemplify the paradoxical conjunction of analysis and synthesis, of the expression of wholeness by means of detail, which marks the transcendent achievement. Understandably, some will equate James Whitcomb Riley with Robert Frost, and Norman Rockwell with Andrew Wyeth. But from these superficial equations another paradox of the Emersonian tradition becomes apparent: the American artist must be a democrat. That is, his art must be "universally intelligible"⁵ for the many, not privately abstruse for the few. Thus, in achieving popularity, the Emersonian artist has apparently fulfilled one of his primary functions. So, as *Self-Reliance* is probably still available in dime-stores as a gift book, and Robert Frost speaks at a presidential inauguration, Andrew Wyeth's pictures are available at supermarket check-out stands in *Woman's Day* and *Reader's Digest*.

Yet transcendentalism, like all brands of idealism, is one of the most difficult philosophies to understand, let alone to live by. The universal intelligibility of Emerson, Thoreau, Frost and Wyeth brings to mind the anecdote of the man who, upon looking at the eye-chart, says that he can read it, but he can't pronounce it. Anyone can read Wyeth's paintings, but few, if any, can really pronounce them. Yet all these artists try to speak as plainly as they can. Thoreau apologized: "You will pardon some obscurities, for there are more secrets in my trade than in most men's, and not voluntarily kept, but inseparable from its very nature. I would gladly tell all that I know about it, and never paint 'No Admittance' on my gate."⁶

Wyeth, who is conscious of an affinity with the literary artists of the Emersonian or transcendental creative tradition (I use the terms interchangeably), has no "No Admittance" sign on his gate, as the content of his remarks in several interviews attests.⁷ He is quite willing to explain precisely what he is doing. But the more he tries, the vaguer, and more abstract, and more distant from the familiar detail of his paintings his remarks become. Robert Frost never had this problem, but then Robert Frost, an artist of language, never spoke an abstract word without attaching it to a natural symbol. Or without detaching it from the general and the vague. For example, when Robert Frost wants to tell us that "Men work together whether they work together or apart"—certainly a bodiless

⁵ "Art," *Emerson's Complete Works* (Boston, 1898), II, 333.

⁶ Henry D. Thoreau, "Walden" (Concord ed.; Boston, 1929), I, 18.

⁷ In *Horizon*, Sept. 1961; *Woman's Day*, Aug. 1963; *Time*, Nov. 2, 1962 and Dec. 27, 1963; *Atlantic Monthly*, June 1964.

abstraction—he exemplifies the abstraction by attaching it to two natural symbols, a tuft of flowers and a butterfly, which he has detached from the confusion of nature in general.

Attachment and detachment. These words are keys to understanding both the purpose and technique of Andrew Wyeth's art. For the abstract principles of attachment and detachment, we must turn to Emerson, but first it would seem only just to explain the network of influences which legitimately places Andrew Wyeth in the Emersonian tradition. Wyeth is only casually acquainted with Emerson's essays, but he is steeped in Thoreau; both because of his father's enthusiasm and because of his own sincere faith in the basic simplicity of Thoreau. Further, Andrew Wyeth loves the poetry of Emily Dickinson, another follower of Emerson, and he is filled with limitless admiration for Robert Frost, which admiration was reciprocated.⁸ Henry David Thoreau and Robert Frost were artists who searched for the Absolute in examination of the specific and the common. That is, they concentrated their attention on the trees to discover the essence of the forest. The problem which they encounter, as we've seen before, is that the detail, the realistic detail, can blind the audience, who may not see the forest for the trees. Nonetheless, the forest is there, greater, vaguer and harder to grip than the trees. Similarly, in the detailed works of the naturalists and the localists Thoreau and Frost, there remain the principles of the abstractionist Emerson. He who can read the artists right cannot but pronounce the philosopher. Thus, Andrew Wyeth has, I think, extracted Emersonian artistic theory from the practical manifestations of this theory in the works of his favorite authors, and for this reason it seems reasonable to use as touchstones some of Emerson's theoretical statements of the ideas which Mr. Wyeth is trying to communicate through naturalistic, representational painting.

"The virtue of art," Emerson wrote, "lies in detachment, in sequestering one object from the embarrassing variety. . . . For every object has its roots in central nature, and may of course be so exhibited to us as to represent the world."⁹ Detachment is Wyeth's method of selection of subject. He detaches the subject from "embarrassing variety" frequently by placing the primary object against a neutral flat background. Thus "Karl" is seen from a very low viewpoint, so that the ceiling, broken only by two hooks and some plaster cracks, is the background. "Young America," again from a low perspective, has featureless gray sky—eighty per cent of the painting—and flat land as the background. A portrait of Mrs. Wyeth

⁸ The validity of these influences has been supported in a letter to the author from Mrs. Wyeth (Feb. 1, 1964) and acknowledged later in a letter from Andrew Wyeth (June 27, 1964).

⁹ "Art," pp. 330-31.

entitled "Corner of the Woods" shows her seated before a large gray tree-trunk which commands half the space. "Far Away," the portrait of young Jamie Wyeth in the fur cap, shows the boy seated against a hillside of dry grass. Yet another kind of detachment operates. Wyeth paints no group pictures. People are alone in his paintings, and where there are no people, then buildings, berry baskets or logs are alone. When he has two living things as subjects, they are psychologically isolated. In "Distant Thunder," the artist's wife lies with her face covered with a hat, while the dog's attention is focused on the thunder, not on its human companion. And in "Raccoon" three dogs are shown in three worlds: one, her chain drawn taut, facing left, one lost in repose in the center and one consumed in introspection. Detached. All Wyeth's subjects have an air of detachment which not only separates them from the other objects in the composition, but from artist and audience as well. Perhaps this is what prompts so many to compare Wyeth's portraits to those of Thomas Eakins. But Wyeth goes a step further, nearly always detaching the primary subject from *itself*. Human figures are oftentimes incomplete—"Trodden Weed," a portrait of Wyeth's boots striding on brown ground, is the most dramatic example—or they are turned away, their attention focused on something beyond our vision, as in "Nicky," where the boy has his back to us and his gaze turned indefinitely seaward; but Wyeth invests the inanimate, as well, with an air of detachment, by cutting the objects off from the whole. In "Northern Point," for example, the head of land is detached from real terra firma, the barn roof is detached from the building, and the sea, one might say, is detached from land and sky by a haze which obscures the horizon. In "Ground-Hog-Day" nothing is complete. The window is cut off, the table is cut off, the sunlight is cut off—even the place setting is cut off, there being only a knife beside the plate and cup and saucer!

Wyeth is often called a dramatic artist. Yet, nothing happens in his paintings, at least no action is taking place. But oddly, this air of detachment of his subjects is charged with drama. The drama is essentially that of tension. The inanimate "Ground-Hog-Day" is tense with the contrast of the sere and windy outdoors and the hope bespoken by the slant of sun on the warm yellow flowered wallpaper within, in addition to the unresolved chord of the incomplete place setting. This is the drama of Emily Dickinson's:

There's a certain slant of light
Winter afternoons
That oppresses like the heft
Of Cathedral Tunes . . .

The composition of "Raccoon" evokes the dramatic tension in the chain which is pulled by a dog whose forelegs and head are off the panel, as well

as in the detached air of the hound on the right, for Wyeth's introspective figures are only physically at rest. The artist's wife, in "Corner of the Woods," is not at ease. She is a portrait of a working mind; not a busy mind, but a working mind. Likewise, "Karl" is physically in one room, but his ear is drawn to another place. And the little boy in "Far Away" is aware of the presence of the artist, but he is yet far away. There is tension in being neither here nor there, but both at once.

These detached subjects, Emerson said, may "represent the world." Wyeth's portrait subjects, as we have seen, are worlds to themselves, in worlds of themselves. Two of Andrew Wyeth's most popular paintings spell out this conception more explicitly. "Chambered Nautilus," probably as close to genre painting as Wyeth ever got, depicts a convalescent girl seated in a tester bed in her bedchamber, thus doubly chambered. She looks out a closed window, and at the foot of the bed on a chest, lies a nautilus shell. This bed is her world, but there is a tension implied in the juxtaposition of her outward gaze and the pressure of the outside world on her bed curtains, which appear to be stirred by a breeze from another window. A treatment of the same subject, less explicit, but more dramatic is "Christina's World." In this painting the detachment of the primary objects from the "embarrassing variety" is quite pronounced: Christina is alone on a vast field, her body intent on the complement of buildings alone on the stark horizon. The featureless expanses of the composition are divided into two almost equal parts by the diagonal tension-line from Christina's feet to the house. Despite the aloneness and detachment of Christina, she dominates the composition. This is technically the result of perspective and color: the balance of empty expanse and primary subject is invariably as perfect in Wyeth's work as in Chinese painting; but the significance of Christina's dominance is important, particularly since the artist said eleven years later that he might have tried now to paint the field without Christina, so that one might "sense Christina."¹⁰

The mark of man on the land is a common theme in the transcendental creative tradition. Thoreau once pondered the death of a man, "and there is nothing but the mark of his cider-mill left."¹¹ Robert Frost's "The Wood-Pile" and "Ghost House" deal with similar themes. Thoreau, in a passage from the book which N. C. Wyeth was illustrating when Andrew was a boy of nineteen, described and analyzed a scene which embodies much of the drama, composition and significance of Andrew Wyeth's paintings. Thoreau had gone to Long Island to search for the "relics" of the famous woman transcendentalist Margaret Fuller, her husband and her child, who had been shipwrecked off Fire Island on their return from Italy. A body had been found the day before, and the site marked with a stick:

¹⁰ *Horizon*, p. 100.

¹¹ *Men of Concord*, p. 45.

I expected that I should have to look very narrowly at the sand to find so small an object, but so completely smooth and bare was the beach—half a mile wide of sand—and so magnifying the mirage toward the sea that when I was half a mile distant the insignificant stick or sliver which marked the spot looked like a broken mast in the sand. As if there was no other object, this trifling sliver had puffed itself up to the vision to fill the void; and there lay the relics in a certain state, rendered perfectly inoffensive to both bodily and spiritual eye by the surrounding scenery. . . . It was as conspicuous on that sandy plain as if a génération had labored to pile up a cairn there. Where there were so few objects, the least was obvious as a mausoleum. It reigned over the shore. That dead body possessed the shore as no living one could. It showed a title to the sands which no living ruler could.¹²

Where man has passed, and left his mark, the sense of his presence is sovereign. Christina's world is the world which she has possessed; and so we can begin to understand how Wyeth might be tempted to paint Christina's world without Christina. As we shall see, his work has been coming closer to this achievement in past years.

Detachment, therefore, explains much of Wyeth's techniques of composition, but detachment alone is only a trick, albeit a worthy one. Attachment is equally important in the transcendental creative tradition, as we've casually observed in Robert Frost's "The Tuft of Flowers." Transcendental philosophy is basically monistic, believing in the unity of matter and spirit, and therefore the details of nature are important only as they exemplify the over-soul, the unifying principle. In his first essay, "Nature," Emerson stated that "Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact."¹³ And in later works he asserted that the task of the poet, the artist, the seer, was to restore the beauty of the unity of natural fact and spiritual fact. He said, "For as it is dislocation and detachment from the life of God that makes things ugly, the poet, who re-attaches things to nature and the Whole—re-attaching even artificial things and violations of nature, to nature, by a deeper insight—disposes very easily of the most disagreeable facts."¹⁴ It is here that Thoreau's observations about the woodchuck and the boy become clear. He is reattaching the natural fact, the woodchuck's unity with his skin, one might say, to the apparent violation of nature in the woodchuck skin's becoming an article of human clothing. The boy's warmth and his sparkling eyes make the displaced woodchuck-skin an object of beauty.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹³ "Nature," *Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Centenary ed.; Boston, 1903), I, 26.

¹⁴ "The Poet," *Emerson's Complete Works* (Boston, 1898), III, 23.



Tenant Farmer, tempera, 1961. From the William E. and Mary Phelps Collection, Delaware Art Center

A recent Wyeth painting, "Tenant Farmer," shows an old red brick farm house with a barren weeping willow before it, and hanging from the willow, a deer. Of this painting, the artist said, "I kept seeing the deer swing around under the willow tree, and he seemed almost to have an affinity with the building, almost, well, as if he'd lived there. And it became more than a deer shot by some damn hunter. It became a symbol to me."¹⁵ The house is "artificial," the slain deer a "violation of nature," but to the artist there is a consistency, a wholeness about the two. In composition, Wyeth succeeds in evoking a balanced whole despite the overwhelming weight of the color and mass of the house, which seems almost on the verge of devouring the deer, partly because the lacework of the willow tree holds in its interstices the gray sky, which characteristically in Wyeth's paintings is flat, neutral and blends with the snow. In other words, although the house has all the weight, the deer and the tree command the natural background. But this does not make the deer live in the house. Two symbols do, however. In what is almost a Wyeth hallmark, a window is open and the curtain is blowing in. Like Frank Lloyd Wright's, and Thoreau's, for that matter, bringing the outdoors indoors, these windows and curtains join the outer natural world, whose sovereign in this picture is the hanging deer, to the man-made artificial interior.

For the second symbol, we must, like the artist, lean on the crutch of language. The painting is entitled "Tenant Farmer," and so we know that

¹⁵ *Horizon*, p. 88.



River Cove, tempera, 1958. Private Collection, New York

the violated creature of nature is not an urban trophy, but something which will be ingested and digested by the man who killed it. Man and deer will be one, as boy and woodchuck became one. One sidelight: a prospective buyer's wife asked that Mr. Wyeth paint the deer out of the picture,¹⁶ doubtless because it was a "disagreeable fact." This may seem a prototype of philistinism, yet Thoreau had been bothered by somewhat the same problem as was this woman as he watched the savagery of a hen-hawk. He concluded, "What we call wildness is a civilization other than our own. . . . So any surpassing work of art is strange and wild to the mass of men, as is genius itself."¹⁷

One of the strangest and wildest and most abstract of Andrew Wyeth's paintings is "River Cove," which is composed of three triangular masses in the bottom four-fifths of the panel and two horizontal strips at the top, one dark and wide, one light and narrow. The lowest triangle, whose hypotenuse runs down from left to right is the shallow brown bottom of the river. The second triangle is a low peninsula of shell-littered gray mud. The third triangle is the reflected sky, the first strip the inverted reflection of dark evergreens on the bank and the highest strip is the other gray strand edging the pool. The only sign of an animal is three heron tracks. And the only man is the invisible artist through whose eyes we see. But in this rectangular composition are five depths of nature: bottom, beach, surface, sky and forest; and two depths of time, the static and eternal symbolized by the still water and air, and the transitory symbolized by the tracks of what has been and gone. The scene is a wild, disordered segment of nature, but the artist, by stratifying the forms, has reattached the apparently ugly variety of nature and in this case has come closer to a truly transcendent unity than in any of the other works discussed here. The disordered is ordered. The sweep of nature from submarine to stratosphere has been condensed—and with no abuse of epistemological accuracy—to one small rectangle of egg-tempera. Thoreau too finds Time in the strata of natural fact: "Time is but a stream I go a-fishing in. I drink of it; but while I drink I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars."¹⁸ To reduce such abstractions as these to paint, to reattach man, nature and time to eternity, to show Christina's world without Christina; these are the tasks which Andrew Wyeth has set for himself, and with increasing sureness, he is succeeding, and drinking deeper as the stream flows past.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁷ *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau*, eds. Bradford Torrey and Francis H. Allen (Boston, 1959), XI, 450.

¹⁸ "Walden," p. 109.

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The Genteel Reader and *Daisy Miller*

IN AN AGE IN WHICH ONE PRESIDENT IS CRITICIZED FOR HAVING A BOSTON-Harvard accent and another has it held against him that his speech is that of the Pedernales Valley, the concern with manners is far from dead. Manners may be an expression of nationality, or section, as well as morals; and many are content to judge the person by them alone. In a stable society such as once might have been presumed to exist, this may have been possible. But society has not been stable in America or Europe for quite some time. Whenever two people meet, there is apt to be a comedy of misunderstanding, and when people from different cultures meet, the chances are considerably multiplied. Below manners lies personality, which must be reached somehow; we ignore it at peril to our civilization. But the chances for misinterpretation are great, and the result is not always comic. So it might be instructive to look at a classic literary example of misjudging character through manners: the blunders of the ill-starred Winterbourne in trying to understand the elusive Daisy Miller.

In all fairness to Frederick Winterbourne, we must admit that the difficulty in judging character through manners is one of which he is not exactly unaware. When the American colony at Rome ostracizes Daisy and he is struggling to divine her attitude toward their treatment of her, he can come to no certain conclusion: ". . . he was vexed at his want of instinctive certitude as to how far her eccentricities were generic, national, and how far they were personal."(61)¹ This vexation was unfor-

¹ Henry James, "Daisy Miller: a Study," *Cornhill Magazine*, XXXVII (June 1878), 678-98; XXXVIII (July), 44-67. All subsequent page references are to this text.

tunately not shared by contemporary reviewers of *Daisy Miller*, who wrote as if they knew exactly what they thought of her. Although emphatic, their opinions did not always coincide; they include the assertion that Daisy was bad-mannered and had more money than moderation (*New York Times*),² that Daisy and her mother were "impossible" eccentrics (*Harper's*),³ that American young ladies abroad are usually dreadful (*The Nation*),⁴ and, from the other side of the Atlantic, that Daisy was a delightful exotic, while Americans abroad in general are censorious and dreary snobs (*Blackwood's*).⁵ True, on our own shores Daisy had a few defenders, notably William Dean Howells, but in general Yankees—or at least reviewing Yankees—were furious with her. This may be a sign of continuing American sensitivity about the behavior of other Americans abroad, but the whole problem of the difficulty in judging character through manners was left untouched. Subsequent critics have recognized the difficulty other characters in the tale have in judging Daisy, but more often than not have gone on to give their own opinions of her, which vary from praise to blame in a manner not unlike that of the early reviewers, although they are not so vehement about it.

The cause lies in James' method of presentation. Throughout the story Daisy is seen from the outside,⁶ we perceive her words and actions through the eyes of Winterbourne, who is not a very effectual observer. His effectuality is hampered by his being a servitor of Mrs. Grundy—or of Mrs. Costello, as she is called in the story. It is noteworthy that Mrs. Grundy, or Mrs. Costello, is an American, not a European; that Winterbourne, although protesting faintly, is subservient to her; and that his final betrayal of Daisy, when he lets her know in the Colosseum scene that he thinks her a bad girl, occurs when he gives in to Mrs. Grundy. He is entirely too much in awe of public opinion and hesitates to judge or act for himself. Daisy, on the other hand, is all too independent in judgment and action. Both come to a bad end, one in the Colosseum, the other in James' sarcastic little final paragraph. What are we to think of this? Does public opinion always get in the way of evaluating others? Is true judgment through manners possible?

It may be helpful to formulate certain attitudes and pose certain questions about them, the answers to which will depend on our own view of life:

² November 10, 1878, p. 10.

³ December 1878, p. 310.

⁴ XXVII, December 19, 1878, 386-89.

⁵ CXXVI, July 1879, 88-107.

⁶ Cf. Christof Weglin, *The Image of Europe in Henry James* (Dallas, 1958), p. 63.

- 1) Daisy is so unaware of or defiant toward form that she goes her own way, not caring what Rome thinks of her or what the Americans think of her. The question is, should she care?
- 2) She is interested in Winterbourne and can't find any way to reach him: he's too chilly. The question: does she try hard enough?
- 3) Much of the story concerns itself with attitudes toward gossip and rumor and the tremendous pressure exerted by a not-too-well-informed public opinion. Should one give it too much weight?
- 4) Below all this lies the problem of whether or not we can judge people. Can we even understand them, especially when they come from or interact with people of different cultures; or are they finally inscrutable? We know what Joseph Conrad thinks; can we tell what Henry James thinks in this story?

I submit that the answers each of us gives to these questions will depend on our attitudes toward spontaneity and formality, feminine and masculine courtship roles, individualism and group-centeredness, and finally the mystery of human communion and love. Since Henry James has presented Daisy purely from the outside, leaving us to draw what conclusions our temperaments and training incline us to, it strikes me that he has given us a double-jointed story which admits of more than one interpretation of the characters, depending, as I have said, on our own view of life.

This may account for the variety of responses to the story on the part of contemporary reviewers, but where does James stand? Can we tell? I think we can. I think he has written a very ironic tale in which social class and the snobbishness that goes with it brings out the worst in everybody, except Mr. Giovanelli. The preoccupation with manners is so great that the characters have forgotten the original purpose of manners: to make social intercourse easier and more pleasant. Everyone except Mr. Giovanelli is afraid to be simple and direct; their sophistication undercuts their humanity, and even Mr. Giovanelli's entanglement with the class system and incomprehension of American manners interferes with his judgment when he lets Daisy persuade him to take her to the Colosseum by moonlight, which he clearly should not have done.

Here a distinction may be in order. The eyes of all the characters may be fixed upon Daisy, but the focus of the story is not on Daisy's fate, which is somewhat underplayed, but on the fate of those who observe and respond to her. Of these, Mrs. Costello and, to a lesser degree, Mrs. Walker, may be taken as exemplifying in a transplanted setting all that has been said by De Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill about the tyranny of public opinion in a democracy. They are sorry snobs, and that is all

there is to it. The cases of Mr. Giovanelli and Winterbourne are more instructive, since, as we shall see, the Roman moves toward comprehension of Daisy's character, the American away from it. It is the American—who is traditionally supposed to judge people as individuals, free from class bias—who makes a dreadful blunder, and the European—who is traditionally supposed to see everything in terms of manners and social class—who comes to a true understanding of Daisy's worth.

During most of the story the question of Daisy's character is up in the air, and the other characters are as much at sea concerning her as the reader is. (No doubt this is the result of a deliberate effort on James' part.) We are not shown the workings of Mr. Giovanelli's mind, but we are shown Winterbourne's:

Was she simply a pretty girl from New York State—were they all like that, the pretty girls who had a good deal of gentlemen's society? Or was she also a designing, an audacious, an unscrupulous young person? Winterbourne had lost his instinct in this matter, and his reason could not help him. (685)

* * * *

And then he came back to the question whether this was, in fact, a nice girl. Would a nice girl—even allowing for her being a little American flirt—make a rendezvous with a presumably low-lived foreigner? . . . It was impossible to regard her as a perfectly well-conducted young lady; she was wanting in a certain indispensable delicacy. . . . But Daisy, on this occasion, continued to present herself as an inscrutable combination of audacity and innocence. (51)

Since none of the characters knows what Daisy is like until after she is dead, it might be interesting to speculate about her character in accordance with what little James has told us about her. In fact, we might draw up two contrasting interpretations of her, labeled "Daisy *pro*" and "Daisy *con*," depending on our attitude toward that series of paired opposites I mentioned a few paragraphs back. If we do so, the result might be something like this:

1) *Daisy pro*: Assuming that Daisy was serious in the message she left for Winterbourne on her death bed and that, in his words, "she would have appreciated one's esteem," she has had a hard time with a man of Winterbourne's frostiness; he is hardly a knight on a white charger. Not only does he let gossip rule him, he uses it as an excuse to mask his own hesitations and nonassertiveness. On this level, Daisy and Winterbourne are prototypes of a long series of noncouples in American fiction and prefigure the theme of the headstrong girl and the ineffectual man. (They certainly prefigure Lily Bart and Lawrence Selden in Edith Wharton's

House of Mirth.) But the headstrong girl is not at all happy that the man is ineffectual. She keeps waiting for him to show some interest in her; he does nothing. He not only believes but is glad to believe the gossip about her,⁷ jumps to a quick conclusion about her in the Colosseum, thinks she is a bad girl and decides he's been wasting his time. She's friendly, she's playful, she tries to let him know she's interested in him, but all to no avail; he's just dead. He's Winter-born, and Winter, as Northrop Frye tells us, is the time for irony and satire.

If this interpretation is correct, Daisy, piqued by Winterbourne's unwillingness to commit himself, is stung into spending most of her time with Mr. Giovanelli. Winterbourne has refused to stand up for her when she is criticized by the American colony, he has declined to commit himself when she twists him by pretending to be engaged to Mr. Giovanelli; Daisy might well echo the wail of Liza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*: "Words, words, words!" And so she visits the Colosseum by moonlight with Mr. Giovanelli. Why does she risk the *perniciosa* by going to the Colosseum at night? I suppose because she is young, because she doesn't believe anything seriously bad will ever happen to her ("I never was sick, and I don't mean to be! . . . I don't look like much, but I'm healthy!") William Hazlitt began a famous essay by declaring that "No young man believes that he shall ever die." The same holds true for Daisy Miller, and it might be said that, insofar as she is a type, no young American girl believes she will ever be compromised.

2) Daisy *con*: According to this interpretation, Daisy is a "pretty American flirt" who is not really interested in Winterbourne at all, but merely in demonstrating her own power over men. She comes to dominate, and ends up by becoming a victim. She is self-centered, headstrong, petulant and not really interested in anyone but herself. She wants everyone to dance attendance on her, she wants always to remain uninvolved and dominant; with her, it is all taking and no giving. Her refusal to accept criticism and her attitude that "nobody tells *me* what to do" render her insufferable. Although she left a last message for Winterbourne, if she had recovered from her fever, she would have changed her mind about him. She has been spoiled by an ineffectual mother and an absentee father who is busy piling up dollars in Schenectady ("My father's rich, you bet!"); his deputy is her little brother Randolph, who represents in miniature the unpleasant bragging American tourist who goes through Europe, cigar in hand ("I can't get any candy here—any American candy.

⁷ "It would therefore simplify matters greatly to be able to treat her as the object of one of those sentiments which are called by the romancers 'lawless passions.' That she should seem to wish to get rid of him would help him to think more lightly of her, and to be able to think more lightly of her would make her much less perplexing." (51)

American candy is the best candy"). Daisy refuses to take advice from anybody, man or woman; and when Winterbourne tries to keep her from meeting with Mr. Giovanelli and insists he will stay with her when she persists, she thinks he is trying to manipulate her, when he is only trying to help her ("I have never allowed a gentleman to dictate to me, or interfere with anything I do"). But she herself is not above manipulating men by means of her sex appeal; she is not so much innocent as selfish. Daisy uses sex appeal to attack the class system, which is hurting her; she sets up an oscillation which makes women strike at her through the class system; then she hits back at them through her power over men. Although she may not have social standing, Daisy is a plutocrat as well as a beauty, and she well knows the power of these two things. It is even possible to give an economic interpretation of *Daisy Miller*, especially after reading Thorstein Veblen on women as status symbols. It would run somewhat like this: the reason Daisy blushes and is offended when Winterbourne suggests she may be in love with Giovanelli is that a young American woman is encouraged to regard her marriageability as her market value and use it as a bargaining counter. This involves not admitting that she cares for a man until he has spoken for her and has been accepted, i.e., until her market value has been wisely invested in a blue-chip engagement and she herself is safe. In suggesting that Daisy may be in love with Giovanelli, Winterbourne is driving her market value down and putting her in the position of appearing to allow herself to be hypothecated by Giovanelli. This view shows Daisy as a business woman and sees her motives as a mixture of commercial bargain-hunting and sexual prudery. Fantastic as it sounds, this view may have something to recommend it; it's clearly not the whole story, but it may be there.

It now appears that we have been reading two different stories, one entitled "Poor *Daisy Miller*, or, A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (Henry James himself inclined to this view, both in his letter to Mrs. Linton⁸ and in his preface to the New York edition of the tale⁹), and the other, "Cold-Hearted *Daisy*, or, The Selfish Young American Flirt." The latter will appeal to any man in a misogynistic mood; I myself think the story is double-jointed and there is truth in both titles. But perhaps there is a third story we haven't read yet; Henry James may be counting on the genteel reader's stock responses. It was common for European authors addressing a European audience to begin a story with a stereotype of an unattractive American, and then gradually present the character in a

⁸ Henry James to Lynn Linton, ca. 1880, in George Somes Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton* (London, 1901), pp. 233-34.

⁹ James, "Preface to *Daisy Miller*," in *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James*, ed. R. P. Blackmur (New York, 1934), pp. 267-87.

more and more favorable light. An example contemporary with James was "Ouida" (Miss de la Ramée), of whom Elizabeth Hoxie writes:

In *Moths* (1880), . . . it was easy to take offense at Miss de la Ramée's picture of Fuschia Leach, the "wild little republican" with the "high, thin voice," who said "cunning" for "nice" and rested "her feet on an ottoman; her hands behind her head, a rosebud in her mouth, and a male group around her." Nevertheless, Fuschia proved popular because of her high spirits ("everybody delights her and everything is fun to her").¹⁰

In such stories the author plays a trick on his audience by eliciting a stock response from it. The reader, presented with a character at whom people jeer, thinks he understands the story; he feels sophisticated but is only responding to a stereotype. Then as the character is more fully presented in more human terms, he does an about-face as he gradually perceives he has been taken in. James does the same thing in *Daisy Miller*, only in this case the trick is perpetrated on an American audience responding to the story of an American abroad. The reader first sees Daisy through the eyes of Randolph, her awful little brother, who thinks all things American are best except his sister. Then Daisy meets Winterbourne, without a formal introduction, through the same brother; she "picks him up" and wangles an invitation from him to visit the castle of Chillon. The reader, if he is sufficiently genteel and places a high enough value on formal manners, winces at this image of his country-woman abroad; snobbery and prudery combine to make him agree with Winterbourne that Daisy must be either a sexual adventuress or else a dreadfully vulgar parvenu. Then he encounters Mrs. Costello and has all his convictions as to Daisy's vulgarity thrown back in his face, and this from a woman who is as narrow, rigid and heartless a snob as one is likely to meet among Americans in Europe. The reader becomes uneasy; this is not quite the company he wanted to keep. Then he begins to criticize Winterbourne for keeping and listening to such company. He finds that the Americans in Rome, who are the first group he is likely to identify with, are actually the last people whose judgment is to be trusted; it is the poor despised Mr. Giovanelli, upon whom they all look down, who has the final and kindest word on the case. The genteel reader's own snobbery is exposed to him and revealed as the ridiculous and destructive thing it is.

From this point of view the story is about the shameful waste which can result, not only from snobbery, but from sheer ineffectuality and

¹⁰ Elizabeth F. Hoxie, "Mrs. Grundy Adopts *Daisy Miller*," *New England Quarterly*, XIX (December 1946), 482.

blindness, as James ticks off first the snobs, Mrs. Costello and Mrs. Walker, then Mr. Giovanelli, who is kind but ineffectual, then Winterbourne, who is neither effectual nor kind. So the true title of the story we have been reading may turn out to be "Only a Woman, or Daisy Revealed: Stereotypes Are We All Until We Get to Know Each Other if It's Not Too Late." For if the genteel reader has been responding to stereotypes, so have the characters in the novella. Mrs. Costello and Mrs. Walker obviously are; more interesting are the responses of Mr. Giovanelli and Winterbourne. We are not told much about Mr. Giovanelli; he may indeed have started out as a fortune hunter (James tells us "Winterbourne afterwards learned that he had practiced the idiom [English] on a great many American heiresses"), but then again he may merely be a young man out to have a good time in life, in short, a male Roman counterpart of Daisy Miller. Like her, he is good looking and attractive; like her he is looked down upon by those who are confident they can judge people through manners; as in her case, when the problem of sincerity *versus* opportunism comes up, the question is decided against him. His one real blunder, which has deadly consequences for Daisy, is allowing her to persuade him to take her to the Colosseum by moonlight; and this couldn't possibly be attributed to self-seeking. Apparently this arises from an incomprehension of alien manners (he thinks American girls must be allowed to make all their own decisions) and an excess of gallantry to someone above him on the social scale (he acquiesces in everything the lady wishes to do, even when for health's sake he should have taken a firm hand).¹¹ For this he pays heavily. There is every reason to believe that he means it when he tells Winterbourne after the burial, "She was the most beautiful young lady I ever saw, and the most amiable. . . . And she was the most innocent." Being in awe of her, he had thought she knew what she could and could not do (including on the level of physical survival); when she falls ill and dies, he realizes that she was just as fallible as poor ordinary European mortals after all.

Mr. Giovanelli may begin in incomprehension of Daisy, but he ends as the only character who realizes she is to be treated with consideration and kindness; and this may be as close to the "truth" about a human being as we are likely to get. With Winterbourne the case is otherwise. He, like the other Americans in the tale, sees life through the spectacles of the picturesque. What he responds to is a guidebook view of life, not life itself. Since this is the way in which genteel American readers of the 1870s may be presumed to have responded to stories about Europe, it

¹¹ "Why the devil . . . did you take her to that fatal place?" . . . "For myself, I had no fear; and she wanted to go." "That was no reason!" (67)

should have been instructive to them to observe Winterbourne's fate. For most of the nineteenth century, the ability to respond aesthetically to the beauties of nature and of European antiquities was supposed to be a class trait. If one were a member of the upper classes, one might have it; if not, one did not. We see this in the stories and sketches of Washington Irving; we see it in the genteel heroes and heroines of Fennimore Cooper. It is still present in Henry James, especially the early James of the 1870s, although by that time he was already beginning to see his way around it and satirize it. What had begun as a fresh and original way of perceiving the irregular beauties of nature, untrammeled by neoclassical symmetry, had rigidified by James' time into a stock response and a badge of class status; part of the snobbery of the American characters in the story is their stereotyped response to the picturesque. That this stock response can put blinders on one person and give him a distorted guidebook view of life is dramatized in the Colosseum scene, where Winterbourne, by seeing everything through the spectacles of the picturesque, actually prevents himself from seeing what is really going on.

The scene begins with Winterbourne's taking an evening walk to the Colosseum, where he starts to quote Byron's famous lines from "Manfred" just before he sees Mr. Giovanelli and Daisy, who see him first. The moonlit scene before him and the lines from Byron induce a romantic reverie which puts him in the worst possible frame of mind to cope with the action-demanding realities which suddenly thrust themselves on him. Here the picturesque is one of the elements which help produce the catastrophe, since it leads him to a mood of unearned exultation followed by a precipitous drop from the sublime to the bathetic. As Daisy calls out to him, he is once again involved with his old fear of women and his inability to assert or commit himself, which he evades by hiding behind the skirts of Mrs. Grundy. James writes:

When, on his return from the villa . . . Winterbourne approached the dusky circle of the Colosseum, it occurred to him, as a lover of the picturesque, that the interior, in the pale moonshine, would be well worth a glance. . . . Then he passed in, among the cavernous shadows of the great structure, and emerged upon the clear and silent arena. The place had never seemed to him more impressive. One-half of the gigantic circus was in deep shade; the other was sleeping in the luminous dusk. (63)

This is just what every genteel traveler in Europe was supposed to feel. The reader is lulled into thinking he is listening to someone who is *au courant* and knowledgeable. But Winterbourne has seen nothing new or fresh or revealing in the scene; it is a stock response. As he stands

there he begins to murmur Byron's famous lines from "Manfred" (III, iv, 1-45) which begin:

The stars are forth, the moon above the tops
Of the snow-shining mountains.—Beautiful!
I linger yet with Nature, for the Night
Hath been to me a more familiar face
Than that of man . . .

Winterbourne clearly feels more at home with the moonlit scene than with the man and woman he is so unexpectedly to meet. The lines continue:

I do remember me, that in my youth,
When I was wandering—upon such a night
I stood within the Coliseum's wall. . . .

and go on in a vein of sentimental musing on the ruins of time which induces in Manfred a pleasant melancholy. He continues:

- And thou didst shine, thou rolling moon, upon
All this, and cast a wide and tender light . . .
Leaving that beautiful which still was so,
And making that which was not, *till the place*
Became religion, and the heart ran o'er
With silent worship of the great of old,—
The dead but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule
Our spirits from their urns. [Italics mine]

We do not know how far Winterbourne has a chance to proceed in the soliloquy before seeing Daisy, but the mention of "Byron's famous lines" should have been enough to call up the whole quotation for the nineteenth-century reader. It is plain that the dead still rule the spirit of Winterbourne; the entire passage as used in this context is an implicit criticism and indictment of this snobbish and ineffectual young man. For, as he walks to the middle of the arena, he sees on the steps which form the base of the great cross in the center a man and a woman, whom from their conversation he recognizes to be Mr. Giovanelli and Daisy. Then at last he is able to make up his mind about her: "She was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect." Not only does he come to an erroneous and damning conclusion about her; he is glad to do so, feeling that he has at last been taken off the hook and is no longer under the necessity of committing himself. The reason he does not immediately advance toward her is not the fear that his judgment may be wrong but "the sense of the danger of appearing unbecomingly

exhilarated by this sudden revulsion from cautious criticism." When Daisy calls out to him that he is snubbing her, he does try to save her from malaria, but he hurts her by laughing at her and informing her of his brutal judgment that he thinks her a bad girl:

Then, noticing Winterbourne's silence, she asked him why he didn't speak. He made no answer; he only began to laugh . . . "Did you believe I was engaged the other day?" she asked.

"It doesn't matter what I believed the other day," said Winterbourne, still laughing.

"Well, what do you believe now?"

"I believe that it makes very little difference whether you are engaged or not!"

He felt the young girl's pretty eyes fixed upon him through the thick gloom of the archway; she was apparently going to answer. But Giovanelli hurried her forward. "Quick! quick!" he said; "if we get in by midnight we are quite safe."

". . . Don't forget Eugenio's pills!" said Winterbourne, as he lifted his hat.

"I don't care," said Daisy, in a little strange tone, "whether I have Roman fever or not!" (65)

She is bewildered; she is hurt. This knowledgeable-sounding young American actually knows nothing and has acted with complete inhumanity toward her. What she says about not caring if she falls ill is more than mere petulance; she is saying that now she doesn't care what happens to her; then she falls ill and dies. In a very real sense, Winterbourne, for whom she cared, has contributed to her death.

All of Winterbourne's vices contribute to undo him with Daisy in the Colosseum scene, but it is his over-indulgence in the picturesque which gives him a distorted view of reality and helps prevent him from acting like a man. The picturesque is the killer here; like any form of sentimentality, when overdone it can mislead people into being extremely cruel. It is significant that the concluding lines from the Manfred quotation run:

"Twas such a night!
 'Tis strange that I recall it at this time;
But I have found our thoughts take wildest flight
Even at the moment when they should array
Themselves in pensive order. [Italics mine]

It is a pity that Winterbourne couldn't continue to the end of the quotation; if he had, he might have learned something helpful to know.

Soon after his soliloquy, Manfred dies of guilt and remorse for unknown but terrible crimes not specified by his creator. His final speech to the spirit that is summoning him to hell contains the lines

I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter. . . .

Winterbourne too has committed terrible "crimes" which are indirectly but clearly specified by Henry James: they resemble those of John Marcher in *The Beast in the Jungle*. He lives on, but he is as good as dead; and he has helped kill the youth of Mr. Giovanelli and the life of Daisy Miller. The two male characters are contrasted with each other, for although the young Roman and the young American are both interested in Daisy and both contribute to her death, their response to the experience is totally different: the Italian shows a vast moral superiority to the traveler from the New World. As Daisy turns from an unknown quantity to a human being for Mr. Giovanelli, she turns from an unknown quantity to a stereotype for Winterbourne. Or, rather, not an unknown quantity but a puzzle. For Daisy is a puzzle to Winterbourne, a pretty little puzzle. When he thinks he has the puzzle figured out, he solves it with a stereotype, and a derogatory one at that. This explains the use of the picturesque in the Colosseum scene; Winterbourne responds only to stereotypes, whether in nature, in architecture or among mankind.

Now we see why the story focuses on those around Daisy rather than on Daisy herself. The question of Daisy's worth, or even of what she really is, is irrelevant to the moral imperative that she is entitled to consideration and respect as a human being; and, in the story, Mr. Giovanelli alone gives that to her. We don't find out much about Daisy, but we do find out what Winterbourne is like. Winterbourne doesn't care at all about the truth of the matter; he is afraid to face it, for the truth may involve him with other people and frighten him by bringing him face to face with himself. So he prefers the appearance of respectability rather than life; appearances are safer, he thinks; all the best people believe in them. But the man who finds the appearance of respectability more important than truth misses out on the best things in life and never understands anyone at all. Henry James, although something of a snob, was also and more importantly an artist; and he was not so big a snob as he has sometimes been pictured or as some of his readers were and are.

But what of the genteel reader all this time? If he were perceptive enough, he would have had his little universe shattered; he would see

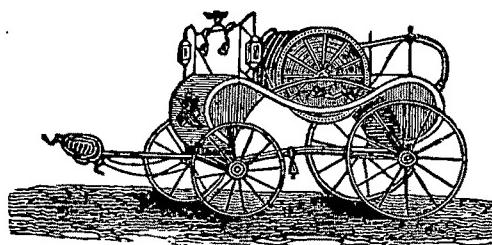
that the implicit criticism and condemnation of Winterbourne is a condemnation of his own habits and tastes. But, judging from contemporary reviews, this is exactly what did not happen. The reviewers remained genteel; they reacted not perceptively but angrily. In a perverse way, this proved James' point; the carapace of gentility was so thick as to be impervious to ridicule, which only aroused a defensive and self-righteous anger. So I will have to confine my comments to how the readers might have reacted, had they read the story with attention rather than indignation.

In presenting the Colosseum scene to us, James is dramatizing and satirizing the American nineteenth century's most cherished concepts of "culture" and "civilization": "Europe," the picturesque, the daylight-moonlight metaphor of the romantic movement, the genteel, the cult of sexual purity and respectability in young American womanhood. Perhaps the preoccupation with respectability can best sum it up. And overconcern with respectability kills Daisy Miller; "the letter killeth." When Winterbourne approaches Daisy and Mr. Giovanelli in the Colosseum, they, intensely conscious of their surroundings, imagine he looks like an old-time lion or tiger eyeing the Christian martyrs. This is neither as playful nor as far-fetched as it sounds. For fantastic as it at first seems, Winterbourne actually *is* a lion ready to devour poor Daisy. As a representative of the American colony at Rome, he is quite exhilarated to see her sacrificed to that crowd; in the words of another line from Byron, she is "butchered to make a Roman holiday." In every sense including the physical one, Daisy Miller is a martyr to the genteel tradition on the very spot where the Christian martyrs died centuries before. The barbarousness of degenerate Rome gives way to the barbarousness of the invading Americans; like the Romans, they too think of themselves as highly civilized. And the reader? One by one he sees his genteel idols smashed before his eyes: Europeans are frankly spontaneous; Americans are rigid formalists; the ruins of antiquity are deadly, not life-giving; "respectability," far from civilizing people, dehumanizes them; the cult of sexual purity kills life itself. One could go on: the "untrustworthy" "lower-class" European becomes the noblest Roman of them all; the genteel American abroad becomes an agent of death and destruction comparable to the ancient persecutors of the martyrs; the American colony at Rome becomes the howling mob that once filled the Colosseum with their bloodlust, interested only in the brutal gladiatorial games of the *haut monde* in which to turn thumbs down on a person means instant death for him. The genteel audience should have squirmed under self-scrutiny when it saw that the un-Manfred-like

"crimes" of Winterbourne are exactly the crimes of negation, exclusion from human sympathy and snobbish cruelty that were most likely to be committed by the genteel nineteenth-century American Puritan reader. This story is about the disintegration of value (as are Edith Wharton's *House of Mirth* and Scott Fitzgerald's *Great Gatsby*, both of which were influenced by it), and it contains a revealing glimpse of cultural history. It shows a falling-off in value from the plain living and high thinking of pre-Civil War Boston (for in the story America is Boston);¹² the land of the free has become the home of the genteel. The Americans in this tale have taken the ideals of an earlier America and stood them on their heads—something they would never have done with their persons. By their whole way of living, they have taken the pre-Civil War statement of Emerson's, that transcendentalism was a *Saturnalia of faith*,¹³ and inverted it. Instead, they enact a *Saturnalia of snobbery and unbelief*, and this not in the New England where their far-off ancestors had once proposed to found a city on a hill, but in eternal Rome, where indeed the entire world can see.

¹² It is instructive to see how in *Daisy Miller* Henry James opposes Geneva, the "little metropolis of Calvinism" where Winterbourne spends so much time because he prefers and understands it (and which is not unlike Boston: indeed, constantly attending one's aunt was a Boston habit), and Rome, the great metropolis of the world, in which he is lost.

¹³ Emerson "says in 1842, in the Boston Masonic Temple, that transcendentalism is a 'Saturnalia of Faith,' an age-old way of thinking which, falling upon Roman times, made Stoic philosophers; falling on despotic times, made Catos and Brutuses; on Popish times, made Protestants; 'on prelatical times, made Puritans and Quakers; and falling on Unitarian and commercial times, makes the peculiar shades of Idealism which we know.' " (Perry Miller, "From Edwards to Emerson," *Interpretations of American Literature*, Charles Feidelson Jr. and Paul Brodtkorb Jr., eds. [New York, 1959], p. 117). Accordingly, Daisy Miller, with her "peculiar shade of Idealism," might be the last transcendentalist, fallen on evil days in Rome.



Notes

French Critics and American Jazz

JAZZ IS A MORE CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE IN FRANCE THAN IT IS, OR EVER HAS been, in the United States. This is probably a result of the doctrinaire treatment which it receives at the hands of its French critics. *Jazz Hot*, a monthly publication, enlightens its readers with articles on "Question de Doctrine" in which jazz as a music and a social philosophy is defined and described.¹ Once the articles of faith are enumerated, they must be defended against outside forces which threaten to destroy them. In the first postwar issue of *Jazz Hot* the editors chose to make clear to the French jazz public their own sense of duty.

We know very well that there are not two musics equally valid in jazz substance, but only the good (the true) . . . and the other. And without ever having pretended to be the only possessors of the unique truth, time has proved to us—very much so—that from the beginning we were on the right track in siding with the Louis Armstrongs, the Bessie Smiths, the Coleman Hawkins. . . .²

Jazz appears to be endowed here with all the elements of a religion which the faithful (the critics) must defend against heretics and infidels. The real threat, as we shall see, is posed not by an indifferent or even hostile public, but by those who claim to play a music which they call jazz, but which is not the authentic item. The rigidity of the definition is clear. There is no such thing as a continuum along which one finds music possessing some of the elements of jazz. There is simply jazz and nonjazz, as there is good and bad, or truth and falsehood.

Because of this systematic treatment and the presumed purity of jazz, the music is subject to corruption from several sources. On the one hand, as a proletarian item, it is unable to defend itself against the sinister designs of the bourgeois world. "Like the movies or the automobile, jazz has become an industry since the day when Yankee businessmen discovered not jazz itself—as you might well guess—but the possibility of a new exploitation."³ Implicit here is a concept of jazz as a pure and un-

¹ André Hodeir, "Question de Doctrine," *Jazz Hot*, Oct. 1948, p. 3.

² *Jazz Hot*, Oct. 1945, p. 2.

³ Charles Delaunay, "La Musique de Jazz . . . Cette Prostituée" *Jazz Hot*, Nov. 1945, p. 7.

corrupted art divorced from the commercial world and performed by jazz musicians for the simple joy of playing. Dollars and jazz mix like oil and water. If Yankee businessmen are suspect for commercial exploitation of proletarian art, they compound this class crime with a racial one, since they are white men meddling with Negro music. The purity of jazz depends not only on its isolation from the dollar, but from the whole apparatus of western civilization, for

Negro musicians have a unique character: a spirit of their own, one which the whites lack, a kind of ferocity of rhythm, a violence which they call "swing." They also have a great deal of sensitivity, but a brutal sensitivity, absolutely not the sensitivity of whites.⁴

According to the doctrine, then, jazz is a noncommercial art, performed by black men whose principal qualification for playing is their close resemblance to savages. It has no relation to western music, and, in fact, derives its originality from the broad differences between the African and the westerner.

Among the most insidious of the threats to this rigidly elaborated doctrine was the evolution of jazz in the early 1940s toward new forms which attempted to incorporate some of the recent discoveries in European music. The bop school and the cool jazzmen, while obviously drawing on their heritage from the era of classical jazz, displayed an alarming interest in Stravinsky and Schoenberg. To some French critics, this evolution was heresy, and they insisted that the new synthesis was not jazz at all. Led by Hugues Panassié,⁵ they fought a losing battle for the control of *Jazz Hot* and the French jazz clubs.⁶ After the purge of Panassié from the editorial staff of the magazine, the well-known French critic herded his followers into new jazz clubs, leaving the French jazz world split between the faithful who refused to accept the heresy of Charlie Parker and Miles Davis, and the modern groups which managed to revise their doctrine to incorporate the new forms of playing. While there were similar disputes in the United States during the postwar period, no one has seriously suggested that jazz ceased to exist after 1945, probably because no one had so rigidly formulated a definition of jazz beforehand. As one French critic put it, "In New York you can, during the same evening, hear Bobby Hackett, Teagarden, Miles Davis, Count Basie, etc.

⁴ Olivier Despax, "Une Jeune qui voit Blanc," *Jazz Hot*, May 1959, pp. 14-15.

⁵ Coleman Hawkins, the saxophonist, once said of Panassié that "the man just has a one-track mind." Quoted in Leonard Feather, "Coleman Hawkins," in *The Jazz Makers* (New York, 1957).

⁶ "La Scission des Hot Clubs," *Jazz Hot*, Nov. 1947, p. 26.

This is excellent. The notion of 'old' or of 'modern' does not exist in the same manner as in France."⁷

But the bop school was alarming to French critics for still another reason. It tended not only to admit European forms, but white musicians as well. The trouble had begun in the late 1930s with Benny Goodman's white band which pretended to play jazz. The question immediately arose as to Goodman's credentials for playing Negro music. Clearly, he was lacking in pigment. According to *Jazz Hot*, Goodman was an imposter, who, having learned his technique from Négro musicians, was taking bread from their mouths and corrupting their music.⁸ In this respect, the postwar jazz world was even more difficult to grasp for such critics. Lester Young, the father of cool jazz, spoke seriously of his debt to Frankie Trumbauer, a white musician of the 1920s.⁹ While the critics attempted to square this with their doctrine, Miles Davis, the leading trumpet of cool jazz, was playing with Gerry Mulligan in integrated bands and had none of the brutal rhythmic qualities which supposedly characterized the playing of Negro musicians. In short, he played "white."

The whole issue came to a head with the translation and publication of an article by the jazz critic Leonard Feather accusing the French of a kind of reverse discrimination which he called "Crow-Jim." Feather points to the important contributions of white musicians to jazz, and indicates that the Negrophilism of the left has distorted a musical phenomenon and transformed it into a racial one. He asserts that "The most intolerant racists are those Americans from the south who believe that the Negro is a simple, infantile, and happy person who was born singing and dancing. Although he doesn't realize it, this attitude corresponds somewhat to that of the European jazz fan."¹⁰ While some French critics, notably André Hodeir, admitted these charges and attempted to turn the discussion to the musical aspects of jazz, others were enraged by the article and replied that Feather and his kind were engaged in a conspiracy to destroy jazz.

American criticism does not seem to us to be based on historical truth, but rather to be guided by a very subtle neo-racism which consists of temporarily rejecting segregation in order, on the one hand, to assimilate the style of the Negroes as far as this is possible, while, on the other hand, imposing on jazz musical conceptions which are typically white.¹¹

⁷ Henri Renaud, "New York reste vraiment la ville de Jazz," *Jazz Hot*, Nov. 1959, pp. 14-15.

⁸ Hugues Panassié, "Benny Goodman: Faux Grand Homme du Jazz," *Jazz Hot*, July-Aug. 1946, p. 9.

⁹ Charles Delaunay, "'Tram' disparaît," *Jazz Hot*, July-Aug. 1956, p. 15.

¹⁰ "Préjugés," (trans. J. J. Finsterwald) *Jazz Hot*, June 1950, p. 11.

¹¹ Pierre Derens, "Tribune Libre," *Jazz Hot*, Feb. 1952, p. 10.

This curious attack on American critics accuses them of racism on the grounds that they encourage integration in jazz, and then proceeds to revive by implication the concept of jazz as art which thrives in isolation from white civilization. Feather seems not so much to have dispelled "Crow-Jim" as to have evoked an even firmer commitment to the original doctrine.

The anti-American note sounded above is echoed consistently in the columns of *Jazz Hot*. Not surprisingly, the treatment accorded the jazz musicians provides an excellent point of departure for the expression of such sentiments. The fact that jazz received serious attention in France before American intellectuals paid court to it has been a matter of national pride to the French intellectuals. While Hugues Panassié wrote the first serious history of jazz in 1934,¹² *Jazz Hot* published its first issues a year later. The first postwar volume of the magazine provided a proper moment for distinguishing the clairvoyance of French intellectuals from the indifference of the Americans. "Everyone knows that jazz was born in the U. S. But its right to distinction was recognized in Europe. Long before the Yankees realized its interest, intellectuals of the Old Continent became interested in this new music."¹³ Not only are Yankee intellectuals at fault for their neglect of jazz, but so is the American public. "It is quite clear that white Americans understand jazz less and less. They do not make it their daily fodder as I thought," reports Simone de Beauvoir in her travels in 1947.¹⁴ Recalling her visit to a New Orleans night club, Miss de Beauvoir observes of the spectators that "They toy with jazz and scorn it from the height of their white man's dignity where they are well-established financially and morally. Great lords of the past trifled with clowns and historians with a similar arrogance."¹⁵ This jazz musician, so scorned by his American audience, is grateful for the sympathy shown by Miss de Beauvoir and her companion. "who questions the trumpet player, they exchange words, and the young Negro lights up . . . he feels the need to play for someone and it is a chance which he is not often given."¹⁶ The jazzman, rebuffed by an indifferent American society, is rescued by the sympathy bestowed upon him from the solicitous French travelers. The theme suggested above becomes an assertion in the following backstage scene:

When I entered the dressing room of Armstrong—the only white man among many colored admirers—I was strongly moved. He came to meet me and appeared happy to see a Frenchman. He hopes to return to

¹² *Le Jazz Hot* (Paris, 1934).

¹³ *Jazz Hot*, Oct. 1945, p. 2.

¹⁴ *L'Amérique au jour le jour* (Paris, 1954), p. 258.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

France in the near future and confided in me that the French were, in his opinion, the people who understood best the good traditional jazz.¹⁷

French critics often seem more interested in using jazz as a handy instrument for disparagement of American intellectuals, businessmen and the public than in discussing current developments of the music. The reverse side of the anti-American coin is the conscious pride of French critics in their concern for jazz and the American Negro.

The cult of jazz is widespread in France, as the headlines given in the Paris dailies to Sidney Bechet's death indicate, but it does not have equal appeal to all segments of French society.¹⁸ While Jean-Paul Sartre's journal, *Les Temps Modernes*, has published half a dozen articles on the subject in the years since the war, *La Revue*, a more traditional journal, has printed only two short articles (one a continuation of the other), both devoted to a discussion of jazz records rather than performers.¹⁹ Moreover, the articles appearing in *Les Temps Modernes* were written by Lucien Malsen and André Hodeir, both important contributors to *Jazz Hot*, indicating direct personal contact between the editorial staffs of the two journals. In an article entitled "From existentialism in 1948 to Hard Bop in 1959, the St. Germain-des-Pres Club is always in the avant-garde," the reporter contends that jazz was simply the latest and most fashionable among left-wing fads.²⁰ The same crowd which adopted Sartre's philosophy had simply moved on to embrace jazz as a left-wing movement. Granting the truth of this observation, it seems strange that a simple, non-political music should exert such a systematic power of attraction on a highly sophisticated left-wing group in a foreign country.

Despite the apolitical nature of jazz there is much evidence to suggest that interest in the music is simply one manifestation of concern with the Negro problem. For example, *Jazz Hot* justifies the appearance of a review of Franklin Frazier's book *Black Bourgeoisie* on the grounds that "Although the book does not deal with Negro music (to which it makes allusion from time to time) it is worth the attention of all those who have become interested in conditions of Negro life through the music."²¹ It is not altogether surprising that a second review of the same book appears in *Les Temps Modernes*. The reviewer points out that the book was translated into French and published in France before it appeared in the United States, suggesting the appetite of the French left-wing for

¹⁷ Pierre Petitat, "Louis Armstrong à Detroit," *Jazz Hot*, Mar. 1946, p. 8.

¹⁸ Jacques J. Gaspard, "Sidney Bechet, Maître et Symbole," *Jazz Hot*, July 1959, pp. 12-15.

¹⁹ Maurice Cullaz, "Les Disques de Jazz," *La Revue*, May 15, 1950, p. 367.

²⁰ *Jazz Hot*, Feb. 1959, p. 32.

²¹ *Jazz Hot*, Jan. 1956, p. 42.

information about Negro life in America.²² Not only does *Jazz Hot* review sociological studies concerning the Negro, but for six issues it published a series of travelogues on Harlem and other Negro sections of large cities entitled "Voyage au Pays de Blues."²³ Such political items as "Eisenhower inaugurated the new building of the YMCA in Harlem, famous Negro section of New York. . . ."²⁴ are also reported in the columns of this jazz monthly. For many French jazz fans, then, the music is inevitably but an aspect of larger questions of a political and social nature. Jazz is defined as Negro-American music, and as such is an instrument for left-wing denunciation of poverty, race prejudice and exploitation by the ruling class.

Assuming at the outset a doctrinaire approach which emphasizes the African character of jazz and the isolation of the Negro from American life, the French critic finds in his study of jazz confirmation of the many unsavory aspects of American life, including segregation and class exploitation. In contrast, he provides his own audience, generally of left-wing sentiments, with assurance of their virtue in upholding good music, the poor and the exploited—all neglected in America. In this sense, the jazz critic is less a student of Negro-American music than an agent for promoting French nationalism of the left.

DAVID STRAUSS, *Columbia University*

²² *Les Temps Modernes*, Feb. 1956, p. 1339.

²³ *Jazz Hot*, Dec. 1959—May 1960. ²⁴ *Jazz Hot*, Oct. 1949, p. 22.

Another View of American Studies in Transition and American Character and Culture*

ASSUMING THAT THE TWO RECENTLY ISSUED COLLECTIONS—*American Studies in Transition* and *American Character and Culture* (edited by Marshall Fishwick and John Hague respectively)—represent some of the best efforts in the American Studies movement since the Kwiat and Turpie release, it was surprising to see these two works so cursorily and negatively reviewed in the *American Quarterly*.¹ One finds several assumptions and implications in Professor Fisher's review which need to be examined—both for the sake of the collections in question and for the American Studies movement in general.

* Because *American Quarterly* publishes comments on articles and reviews but discourages formal debates which might include a rejoinder, Professor Fisher was not invited to reply.

¹ XVII (Summer 1965), 277-79.

Walt Whitman asked, "Have you learned . . . the politics, geography, pride, freedom, friendship of the land? its substrata and objects? . . . Are you faithful to things?"—and though Tremaine McDowell prefaced his seminal sketch of American Studies with this question, perhaps the only individual within the movement to make a pointed attempt to respond to the question, in both precept and practice, has been John Kouwenhoven. Somewhat ironically, Professor Fisher, whose contribution to American Studies has been a methodologically unique examination of industrialism,² picked the also methodologically unique Kouwenhoven approach (if I may make Professor Kouwenhoven eponymous) as the particular object for attack in his comments on *American Studies in Transition*. Professor Fisher posits the rather hyperbolized polarity of the incipient "antiverbal" movement (represented by Kouwenhoven) versus the traditional "academic, aesthetic and scholarly" movement. In so doing, he implies that the Kouwenhoven approach is, by dialectical necessity, nonacademic, nonaesthetic and nonscholarly; one need only read Professor Kouwenhoven's *Made in America* to realize that this is a fallacious implication. I fear that Professor Fisher (among others) has possibly been misled by the conjunction in the title of Professor Kouwenhoven's recent essay, "American Studies: Words or Things," which is reprinted as the lead-off essay in the Fishwick collection. Contrary to Professor Fisher's interpretation and resultant polarity, I do not believe that Kouwenhoven intends his to be an "either-or" proposition; rather than being "antiverbal" (as tagged by Fisher), he advocates "the recognition, appreciation, and evaluation of the nonverbal elements of American culture" not at the expense of, but in conjunction with, the verbal. What Kouwenhoven promotes in both technique and theme is the fusion, to use his own dichotomy, of the "verbal theories" with the "vernacular realities."³ I feel it is simply a misunderstanding which has caused Professor Fisher, who in his own essay discusses the "machine aesthetic" and the need "to connect social fact with art and artifact," to be so antipathetic to the Kouwenhoven approach.⁴ It may be that he fears the misapplication of that approach.

If so, his fears caused him to be hypercritical in accusing Patrick Hazard (whom Fisher places in the Kouwenhoven school) of trying to transform American Studies into "an information-supplying and policy-

² See his incisive article "The Iconology of Industrialism, 1830-1860," *American Quarterly*, XIII (Fall 1961), 347-64.

³ John A. Kouwenhoven, "American Studies: Words or Things," in *American Studies in Transition*, ed. Marshall Fishwick (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 28-29; hereafter cited as AST.

⁴ *American Quarterly*, XIII, 348.

shaping agency for the mass media . . . [an] academic U.S.I.A." This is a distortion of Hazard's emphasis on "vernacular art" and the desired "qualitative revolution"; and the causal predilections behind the distortion justify both Hazard's objection to "the excessively esthetic bias of the American Studies Movement" and his contention that American Studies ought to be "preparing the way" for the necessary "intellectual revolution instead of wishing it were really as respectable as the literary scholars or as scientifically sophisticated as atomic physicists."⁵ Hazard's "intellectual revolution" would consist primarily of an exponential rate of increase in our cultural self-awareness; the role of American Studies seems plain on this count. And within the discipline itself, perhaps what we need is to be more self-aware and less self-conscious. If we in American Studies are to function as the academically institutionalized vehicle of national introspection and cultural self-analysis, then we should concern ourselves more with communicating to others what we have seen, than with worrying about how we are seen by others.

A commendable feature of both volumes, not discussed by Professor Fisher, is the awareness, on the part of several authors, of the need to clarify and communicate the realities and illusions underlying the American image to a larger portion of not only our own, but also the world populace: the need, in short, for an international perspective in American Studies. One justification which Kouwenhoven gives for his interest in the "vernacular realities" is that "we are deliberately making available to those in other lands certain particulars of our culture that we hope will serve to ground the current of meaning when we talk to them about ourselves."⁶ Lawrence Chisholm, in his imaginatively suggestive essay, places Hazard's "qualitative revolution" in a world context by asserting: "In the long run American Studies should point toward a future world civilization whose citizens may justify the sense of expanded human possibilities which is abroad in the world today."⁷ Fishwick opens the Hague collection by asserting that in our "fast changing world" the need is for men who, in "diagnosing the American dream," will "seek to probe, not to pontificate" and will do so with a sense of Emersonian vision "wider than . . . a nationality."⁸ Hague concludes his essay (and his collection) with an affirmation of our cultural heritage of change and concomitant commitment "to dignify human existence."⁹

⁵ Patrick D. Hazard, "America as an Underdeveloped Nation," in *AST*, pp. 53-66.

⁶ Kouwenhoven, pp. 23-24.

⁷ "Cosmotopian Possibilities," in *AST*, p. 313.

⁸ Marshall Fishwick, "Diagnosing the American Dream," in *American Character and Culture*, ed. John A. Hague (DeLand, Fla., 1964), pp. 3-14; hereafter cited as *ACC*.

⁹ John A. Hague, "The Romantic Heritage and the American Character," in *ACC*, p. 166.

What manifests itself, then, as a shared goal of authors in both collections is that objective which Norman Holmes Pearson would posit for the creative writer in the twentieth century: "a new amalgam of the local and the international." This need for the "new" refers not only to subject matter, but also to manner of treatment. As Professor Pearson says: "The end of an experience, any experience of an age, is where we begin our meditation upon it. It is the beginning of understanding which articulates and orders. The ordering is inevitably a new ordering, the counters used must necessarily be fresh."¹⁰ In their attempt to comprehend the "American experience," many of the essayists in both volumes demonstrate the applicability of these critical dicta to both the creative writer and the cultural critic (who must be a creative writer in his own right). "Fresh counters" appear in both collections.

Methodologically the essays in *American Studies in Transition* and *American Character and Culture*, as did those in their predecessor *Studies in American Culture*, support Robert Spiller's belief that though we in American Studies have "the understanding of the culture of the United States" as our common task, "there is no one research method competent to accomplish it alone. A focus on objective does not necessarily mean a limitation on method."¹¹ Professor Fisher would concur, to a degree, for he cites the three methodologically varied essays by Potter, Persons and Stone as the most successful in the Hague collection. However, to return momentarily to the defense of the "nonverbal" approach not acceptable to Professor Fisher, one should point out that Professor Stone, though not of the Kouwenhoven persuasion, *per se*, implements a "nonverbal" technique in his article on *The Turn of the Screw*. He succeeds in keeping his discussion of American values at a level of meaning communicable to those outside the critical pale by focusing less on the essence of Quint and more on the quintessential social reality of such things as clothing and buildings.¹² Consequently, Stone's article is one of the very few which actually turns the screw so that it penetrates further into wood of the American grain. One need not go so far as to assert, with Whitman's scion William Carlos Williams, that there are "no ideas but in things"; but the attitudes underlying the "things" or "nonverbal" approach can effectively be fused with the verbal as another functional methodology for our examination of both overt and covert culture in the United States—another

¹⁰ Norman Holmes Pearson, "Poetry and Language," in *A Time of Harvest*, ed. Robert E. Spiller (New York, 1962), pp. 71-72.

¹¹ Robert E. Spiller, "American Studies, Past, Present and Future," in *Studies in American Culture*, eds. Joseph J. Kwiat and Mary C. Turpie (Minneapolis, 1960), p. 220.

¹² Albert E. Stone Jr., "Henry James and Childhood: *The Turn of the Screw*," in *ACC*, pp. 92-96.

of many. Undoubtedly "the limitation of scholarship in American Studies to one method and one kind of material would spell defeat, self-inflicted."¹³ We must remain open to new approaches, such as Kouwenhoven's, and transitional approaches such as Stone's; for they represent attempts to cut through the sciolistic verbiage which so often passes for cultural analysis—attempts enabling us to fill in the gaps in our analytical portrait of American culture.

In summary, the essays in *American Studies in Transition* and *American Character and Culture* illustrate why the American Studies movement has been historically described as "eclectic and experimental"¹⁴ and "experimental and exploratory,"¹⁵ with its defining characteristic being "the effort to view any given subject of investigation from new perspectives."¹⁶ Henry Nash Smith, one of the first scholars officially committed to American Studies, once conjectured that if there were to be an actual American Studies method, it would "have to come piecemeal, through a kind of principled opportunism."¹⁷ I would say that this "principled opportunism" has been the method of our many methods, and, though some individuals in the movement may disagree, I would hope that American Studies remains both eclectic and experimental.¹⁸ These are the qualities which have accounted for the vitality of that culture we are purportedly studying, the qualities which in turn have contributed to the vitality and the validity of the American Studies movement to date. Though all this may sound (as Professor Fisher said of several of the essays he reviewed) a bit like a commencement address, I see no reason why we in American Studies should ever hesitate to commence anew—in either technique or theme. It would seem that as the movement endeavors to articulate our changing American character and culture, we will continue to witness American Studies in transition.

JOEL M. JONES, *University of New Mexico*

¹³ Spiller, p. 216.

¹⁴ John Higham, "American Intellectual History: A Critical Appraisal," *American Quarterly*, XIII (Summer 1961), 228.

¹⁵ Spiller, p. 212.

¹⁶ Henry Nash Smith, "Can 'American Studies' Develop a Method?" *American Quarterly*, IX (Summer 1957), 197; or in Kwiat and Turpie, p. 3.

¹⁷ Smith, p. 207; or in Kwiat and Turpie, p. 15.

¹⁸ Cf. Henry Wasser, "Principled Opportunism and American Studies," in *AST*, pp. 166-80.



Reviews

Conducted by Theodore Hornberger

Ideas and the American Revolution

AS THE PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT SUGGESTS, THIS VOLUME¹ IS REALLY TWO books in one. Nearly three-fourths is devoted to reprinting in their entirety fourteen pamphlets, selected along with 58 additional items which will be included in three subsequent volumes, from more than four hundred pamphlets published on the Anglo-American controversy through 1776. Relevance to the controversy, contemporary fame, representativeness, literary distinction and originality were the bases for selection, and the initial fourteen tracts include such well-known pieces as Jonathan Mayhew, *Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission* (1750), James Otis, *The Rights of the British Colonies* (1764), and Daniel Dulany, *Considerations on the Propriety of Imposing Taxes* (1765) along with such comparatively obscure works as *A Letter to the People of Pennsylvania* (1760), Richard Bland, *The Colonel Dismounted* (1764), and Oxenbridge Thacher, *The Sentiments of a British American* (1764). Although they range over a fifteen-year period from 1750 to 1765, only the Mayhew pamphlet was published before 1760, and ten of the fourteen relate directly to the Grenville revenue program of 1764-65. Complete with full annotations and an introduction to each pamphlet placing it in its proper context, analyzing its contribution to the Revolutionary argument, and giving a biographical sketch of the author, this edition of the pamphlets is in itself an impressive achievement. Even more impressive, however, is the editor's book-length general introduction, which is at once a comprehensive assessment of the pamphlets and a searching analysis of the nature of the American Revolution.

A half century ago an earlier generation of scholars, impatient with George Bancroft's innocent and wholesale acceptance of the political arguments of the successful Whig leaders of the Revolution and his insistence that the Revolution had not been revolutionary at all but only a protest against the tyranny of the British government, set out in search of the "real" American Revolution. Like their contemporaries among

¹ *Pamphlets of the American Revolution 1750-1776*. Volume I: 1750-1765. Edited by Bernard Bailyn (with the assistance of Jane N. Garrett). xvi, 771 pp. Belknap Press, Harvard University Press: The John Harvard Library, 1965. \$12.95.

Progressive politicians, they were profoundly skeptical of ideas, regarding them as mere abstractions designed to cloak "real" motives so base and sinister that they necessarily had to remain hidden. Reality to them, as Richard Hofstadter has pointed out in the pages of this journal, was "essentially a stream of external and material events, of which psychic events were a kind of pale reflex," and they were determined to break down the dominant patriot political abstractions, to ferret out and expose the concrete and hard social and economic interests that lay behind them, and to discover what was fundamentally and tangibly revolutionary about the Revolution. What they found, of course, was that the Revolution, like the Progressive period, was largely and most importantly an internal struggle for democracy on the part of nonprivileged groups directed and manipulated by a small band of political and social radicals intent upon destroying the privileges of the colonial aristocracy. For them, the meaning of the Revolution lay not in the separation from Britain and the formation of the Federal Union, as it had for Bancroft, but in the few significant, if in many cases only limited and temporary, advances toward that equality of condition that was finally realized during the age of Andrew Jackson and was subsequently undermined and subverted by the machinations of selfish businessmen and manufacturers in the decades after the Civil War.

Since 1950 a number of special studies, based upon an exhaustive reworking of the evidence, have demonstrated the inadequacy of this interpretation. They have revealed that internal social and economic conflict was distinctly subordinate to the political and constitutional debate with Britain, that what upset the colonists and ultimately caused them to rebel was the threat to American rights and property posed by various British measures after 1763, and that no fundamental changes in the organization of society or the distribution of economic and political power immediately resulted. The net effect of these works has been to re-establish the image of the Revolution as a conservative movement primarily concerned with preserving American liberties and to draw attention away from any revolutionary implications that might have accompanied it. Although most of these works have taken colonial arguments seriously and have placed heavy weight upon the role of ideas and principles, they have been primarily concerned with exploring the substantive issues and examining the nature of political divisions within the colonies and have not made any systematic attempt to define the function and assess the importance of ideas to the Revolution. It is in these two areas—in clarifying the relationship between ideas and the Revolution and in spelling out what was revolutionary and radical in the event

—that the general introduction to the present work makes its most important contributions.

It is the editor's contention that ideas played a dual role. They were, like the pamphlets in which they were expressed, first of all *explanatory*. They reveal, the editor argues, "not merely positions taken but the reasons why positions were taken," and, he insists, it is only through ideas—the beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, motivations and professed goals that "lay behind the manifest events of the time"—that the "contemporary meaning" of the Revolution can be understood. From materials at once disparate and complementary—from the heritage of classical antiquity, the writings of Enlightenment rationalism, the tradition of English common law, the political and social theories of New England Puritanism, and, most importantly, the editor finds, the writings of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English radical dissenting thought which served as "a harmonizing force" to bring all the various materials together—a dominant and comprehensive theory of politics had emerged in the colonies by the middle of the eighteenth century. At the heart of this theory were the convictions that man in general could not withstand the temptations of power, that power was by its very nature a corrupting and aggressive force, and that liberty was its natural victim. To protect liberty against the malignancy of power each of the various elements in the polity had to be balanced against each of the others in such a way as to prevent any of them from gaining ascendancy over the rest. A mixed constitution was the means by which this delicate balance was to be achieved, but power was so pervasive and so ruthless that nothing was safe from it. Within the context of these ideas the succession of restrictive and regulatory measures taken by the British government and royal officials in the colonies after 1765 were unmistakable "evidence of nothing less than a deliberate conspiracy launched surreptitiously by plotters against liberty both in England and in America." Far from being "mere rhetoric and propaganda," such words as slavery, corruption and conspiracy "meant something very real to both writers and their readers" and were expressive of "real fears, real anxieties, a sense of real danger"; and, above all else the editor argues, it was this reading of British behavior and "not simply an accumulation of grievances" that "in the end propelled" the colonists into rebellion. Not just explanatory, then, ideas were also in an important and fundamental way *determinative* and *causative*.

It was ideas as well—the "radical idealization and rationalization of the previous century and a half of American experience" produced by a decade of intense debate—and not the "overthrow of the existing order" that "endowed the Revolution with its peculiar force and made of it a

transforming event." The challenges of the 1760s and 1770s required a critical probing of traditional concepts, and the ideas that emerged—the conceptions of representative bodies as mirrors of their constituents, of human rights as existing above and limiting the law, of constitutions as ideal designs of government, and of sovereignty as divisible—were at once expressive of conditions that had long existed in the colonies and a fundamental reconception of the traditional notions about the "fundamentals of government and society's relation to government." The movement of thought, moreover, quickly spilled over into other areas, and the institution of chattel slavery, the principle of the establishment of religion, and even conventional assumptions about the social basis of politics and the constitutional arrangements that followed from those assumptions were called into question. Ultimately, these "changes in the realm of belief and attitude" and, more especially, the defiance of traditional order and distrust of authority contained within them affected the very "essentials of social organization" and helped permanently to transform the nature of American life.

With this reading of the American Revolutionary experience, the editor has substantially and profoundly altered the nature and direction of the inquiry on the American Revolution. In the process he has also erected a new framework for interpreting the entire first half-century of American national history. His edition of the pamphlets is a significant addition to the literature on the American Revolution; his general introduction is a landmark in American historiography.

JACK P. GREENE, *The Johns Hopkins University*

The Early Lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson, edited by STEPHEN E. WHICHER, ROBERT E. SPILLER AND WALLACE E. WILLIAMS. Vol. II, 1836-1838. xxii, 494 pp. Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1964. \$12.50.

The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle, edited by JOSEPH SLATER. x, 622 pp., Columbia University Press, 1964. \$10.00.

JONATHAN BISHOP, *Emerson on the Soul*. xvi, 248 pp., Harvard University Press, 1964. \$6.75.

THESE three volumes illuminate not only central aspects of Emerson's thought and experience but also many phases of the nineteenth century in which he lived. The crucial link between Emerson's journals and his major essays are the early lectures, which express his developing views on the vital issues of the day and which reveal for the first time the ideas and themes which form the major concern of the essays. This second of a

three-volume edition reproduces from Emerson's manuscripts twenty-three lectures, of which only three have previously been published.

All but one of the lectures were delivered in two series, in Boston, during December of 1836 and of 1837. They examine the intellectual and moral culture of man. In the first series, "The Philosophy of History," Emerson proposes to "write History from the nature of man and illustrate by facts" drawn from the "departments of history": Art, Literature, Politics, Religion, Society, Trades and Professions, Manners and Ethics in order "to denote the mighty analogies which pervade and liken them all." The series is an extensive development of the Transcendentalist principle of "the Unity of Mind; that in all individual men there is but one mind." The second series on "Human Culture" is a sequel to the first and teaches the duty of man to cultivate his powers and tap the "infinite spiritual resources of the Mind and Soul." Also reproduced is the "Address on Education," which Emerson delivered in Providence, R. I. Sharply critical of contemporary civilization, it expresses his pessimism over the Panic of 1837, which he considers symptomatic of the materialism and sensuality of the times. Emerson urges self-culture and self-trust, or reliance on the "Universal Soul," which is common to all men, instead of reliance on the conventions of society.

The *Correspondence* is a continuous record, extending from 1834 to 1872, of the relationship between two of the nineteenth century's major literary figures. The uniqueness of the correspondence is most evident in its breadth and diversity of content. In its concern with autobiography, biography, business, politics, philosophy, religion, literature, aesthetics, there are few vital issues of nineteenth-century life that are not reflected in it. While the correspondence is filled with news of the literary world and its pages are a portrait gallery of English and American writers, the letters are not primarily literary. They record Emerson's lecture trips to Kentucky, Ohio and frontier Milwaukee; his attitude toward slavery; his deep involvement in the Civil War, his reports on democracy in wartime. They record Carlyle's pointed criticism of democracy and his sympathy for the Confederate cause and the southern way of life. The letters are brilliant, bold—but always warm and human—and few literary works reveal as much of the thought and taste of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Bishop's book is a highly specialized study of Emerson's concept of the soul, which is central to Emerson's work, as it is to American Transcendentalist thought. For Emerson, "Soul" is the presumed "subject" of the act of experiencing and is divided into instinct, intellect and the moral sentiment. Mr. Bishop analyzes how and why Emerson divided the

"Soul" into separate faculties and the way in which the special work of these distinct agencies is manifested in each dimension of experience: physical, practical, aesthetic, intellectual, moral, mystical. As an artist, Emerson sought to embody the substance of this doctrine through its verbal demonstration in his work where the three faculties appear through the literary dimensions of rhythm, metaphor and tone. The significance of Emerson's work for American culture, Mr. Bishop maintains, derives from the assumption that Emerson's *Nature* is "our primal book, and that the tradition of prophecy and art descending from it leads not only through Emerson's later work and through Alcott and Thoreau to Dickinson and Frost, but most strongly through the vital center of Melville, Whitman, William James, Henry Adams and Wallace Stevens; it thus constitutes, though not our only tradition, still our greatest, our one indispensable tradition."

CLARENCE A. BROWN, *Marquette University*

EDWARD HANDLER, *America and Europe in the Political Thought of John Adams*. 226 pp. Harvard University Press, 1964. \$5.25.

THIS is a study of relativism and universalism in the ideas of John Adams, from the early days of the Revolution to the period shortly before his death. By relativism the author means those tendencies in Adams' thought which take their point of departure from the proposition that certain characteristics of a nation are to be sharply differentiated from the experience of mankind in general: thus the American tradition was in some important sense unique. Universalism, by contrast, is the strain in which the second President reasons as if the generalizations applicable to universal history can also be employed without serious modification to a particular culture: hence the uniqueness of the American experience was discounted. Handler argues that the relativist-universalist tension in Adams was never completely resolved and that, in fact, it accounts for many of the curiosities and inconsistencies in his thought.

These general observations can best be understood by way of illustrations. In his early *Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law*, his contribution to the struggle against the Stamp Act, he tends to be an American exceptionalist, maintaining that the heritage of a rather peculiar seventeenth-century tradition had set Americans apart from European culture. By the time of his *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America* (1787-88), however, he had seemingly become a universalist. "The relativist perspective has become blurred," Handler contends, "and discrimination of national differences has given

way to an analysis of society and political man couched in terms of universals" (p. 23). Adams' strong emphasis on balance owed much to mechanistic analogies drawn from the Newtonian world view and is to be sharply contrasted with the relativist politics of Burke, who has sometimes been portrayed as close to Adams. Curiously enough, Adams reacted to the French Revolution by suggesting that the American way of revolution was the only correct one: the French Revolution, therefore, particularly after 1791, must be repudiated. Or, as Handler puts it "the offspring was . . . not cast in the image of the parent and must be ruled illegitimate" (p. 172).

In the course of developing the universalist-relativist theme, Handler discusses such questions as the relation of Adams' outlook to the theories of men like Condorcet, Turgot and Burke; Adams' view of religion (a near-Unitarian, he was nevertheless not anticlerical); a priori versus historical approaches to politics; and Adams' rather uncritical acceptance of the British constitution. One of the paradoxes of Adams' position was that while at times he seemed to think that a "new man" was arising in America, he yet built most of his theory on generalizations drawn from the depressing political experiences of the Old World: his illustrations from European history far overshadow those arising out of American political life.

This volume casts an interesting though disturbing light on certain aspects of Adams' political thought and leads one to wonder whether he was really the profound thinker so often portrayed in many textbooks. Do we sometimes too easily identify profundity with views that stress the wickedness of human nature and the dubiety of political perfectionism? It would seem so.

MULFORD Q. SIBLEY, *University of Minnesota*

The Letters and Journals of James Fenimore Cooper, edited by JAMES F. BEARD. Vol. III, x, 466 pp; Vol. IV, viii, 508 pp. Harvard University Press, 1964. \$25.00.

VOLUMES III and IV of Professor Beard's edition of known Cooper materials cover the years 1833-44, at the beginning of which period Cooper had just returned from seven years in Europe. The editor's choice of section headings shows Cooper bringing his customary energy and new sophistication to bear on two large areas: his own writings and the enlightenment of his fellow countrymen. Cooper's own view was that the one was simply an instrument for the other. During these years the writing served more to alienate than enlighten. Among the major issues

between the author and his republic displayed in Volume III are those which developed out of "Letter to His Countrymen" and his account, in *The History of the Navy*, of what happened at the Battle of Lake Erie. Volume IV is largely the record, in appropriate categories, of his jousts with various editors, although the concluding section has many letters devoted to the pitfalls of marketing fiction which reveal the man's characteristic inclination to interpret economic events as personal affronts.

The admirable procedure of the first two volumes is carried on in these two—a brief but sufficient introduction to each part, setting the background and summarizing the issues. Each letter is annotated, giving the source and other data and providing pertinent supplementary documents. With Volume IV, the letters total 786. Approximately 60 per cent of these are published in this edition for the first time—in itself a substantial physical contribution to American materials. If one may register a mournful complaint without seeming ungrateful for so much excellent editing, it is about the matter of indices. One index—of recipients—is affixed to each volume; but beyond that, a general index of persons would increase immensely the value of these letters for research. The final two volumes, with such an index for the complete work, can be expected to appear in the years ahead. Until then, someone in search of a particular reference, say Cooper's remarks about a certain European writer, will have miles to go before he sleeps—miles which Professor Beard and the Harvard University Press might have saved him.

MANLY JOHNSON, *University of Tulsa*

HAROLD ROSENBERG, *The Anxious Object: Art Today and its Audience*. 270 pp. illus. Horizon Press, 1964. \$7.50.

ALTHOUGH he sometimes goes far out of his way in order to pick an unnecessary fight with the academic art historians and critics who, I am sure, bear him none of the ill will he seems to feel, and who, indeed, will probably be only too happy to be corrected where their information is less accurate than his, Mr. Rosenberg is an extremely useful critic. He is, to my knowledge, the only writer to give us in one place a trustworthy account of what it has meant to be an avant-garde painter in New York in the last two and a half decades. This is not always a consistent book, and Rosenberg's own attitudes are disturbingly ambivalent. He repeatedly comes near to mocking what he crusades for. He is an admirer, most of all, of the action painters, though he feels that they have been badly misrepresented by writers who have striven to domesticize them by demonstrating the logic of abstract expressionism in terms of the history of west-

ern art since French Impressionism. In attacking such sympathetic critics, he often attacks their subjects as well.

He has a number of theses which we need to know if we are to understand what has been going on in painting. Some of them are brand new, while others are perfectly familiar to the critics and historians whom he attacks: "The decisive development in American art since the war . . . is that we now have our own art movements" (244), while in the past we have had for the most part merely a number of very good unaffiliated painters. Any art movement, even one "which has not expounded its approach . . . inspires in its followers a fairly uniform set of responses to the major determinants of style . . ." (237-38). The famous Armory Show "was The Great Event in the history of American art education rather than in the history of American art" (191). On the process by which academic art history becomes an influence upon painters as important as any other: "Art becomes valuable through creating the values by which it is valued" (26). On the related subject of the "Vanguard audience," which so strongly influences new art production, Mr. Rosenberg presents an impressive appraisal of the importance of "newness." Feeling that they should know and "understand" what avant-garde painters are doing, members of this audience steep themselves in the writings of museum directors and academic critics. To deal with the new situation, Rosenberg says we need terms to relate new paintings to "the *novelty* in the art that preceded them. The problem is whether such judgments will have time to take hold before the next wave of novelty breaks" (235). If I may be permitted to offer a suggestion based on my own work with elite audiences, I would say that behind what Mr. Rosenberg has accurately observed is the fact that the "Vanguard audience" is itself very new to elite arts; in a fluid society, aesthetes become aesthetes through a process of self-education. And since even very traditional elite art is brand new to the members of this audience, their response is from the start different from that of an aesthete born, so to speak, to the cloth. Indeed, the pressure for newness is ultimately the result of the demands of the audience. Since people new to the arts are to some extent surprised by everything, and then find explanations so that they can understand what it is all about, "surprise and explanation" is the pattern they continue to expect from art. Mr. Rosenberg's suggestion that we devise an aesthetic based upon this pressure for novelty is an extremely fruitful idea, although it is not really new in the American arts. Poe, who perhaps more spectacularly than any of our other artists felt the uncertainty of being a newcomer to the arts, was, as one might expect, also the first of our artists to suggest an aesthetic which found an important place for novelty. The

facts which Mr. Rosenberg records document this thesis. Having for the first time produced an art movement of our own, legitimately based in creative traits of the American personality, and having succeeded, especially in the eyes of Europeans, in displacing Paris as the center of avant-gardism in the world of painting, we have promptly turned to a full-scale attack on this highly successful school through such forces as Pop Art, Op Art and the propaganda for the New Realism.

Besides essays on the force of art history, on the reasons behind Pop Art, abstract expressionism and "newness," this book also contains excellent discussions of individual painters: Arshile Gorky, Willem DeKooning, Hans Hofmann, Saul Steinberg, Barnett Newman and Jasper Johns. It is a valuable contribution to our sense of what's going on. Better than any other writer today, Rosenberg gives us the feel of the artist's boots in the frustrating and inconsistent art world in which "the value of the new is measured not by pre-established standards but by the genuineness of the novelty and the possibilities to which it gives rise" (233-34).

STUART LEVINE, *University of Kansas*

DANIEL LEVINE, *Varieties of Reform Thought*. xiii, 149 pp. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1964. \$3.00.

ALTHOUGH the discovery that the reformers of the Progressive Era were a varied lot is not so original as Mr. Levine appears to believe, it is nonetheless useful to have this study of some of the diverse approaches to reform.

Levine chooses six examples to illustrate his point. Jane Addams emphasized the unity of mankind, whom she saw as essentially good, while Samuel Gompers accepted class conflict and sought to exploit it for the benefit of his fellow workers. The Civic Federation of Chicago wanted "social stability and order through rule by the enlightened few." Albert J. Beveridge was not so much interested in reform itself as he was in a centralized nation run by a powerful and efficient government. Edgar Gardner Murphy, a less-well-known southern Progressive, looked for an elite of intelligence and character to balance the wild swings of a too-democratic society, while Robert M. La Follette had no fear of the widest possible extension of democracy because of his confidence in the rationality of man.

Levine finds that none of the current generalizations about the Progressives fits this heterogeneous group, and concludes that "the best answer to the question, what did American reformers think about the nature of man and of society is: 'They disagreed.' "

RANSOM E. NOBLE, *Pratt Institute*

WILLIAM F. OGBURN, *On Culture and Social Change: Selected Papers*, edited by Otis Dudley Duncan, xxii, 360 pp. University of Chicago Press, 1964. \$7.50.

LOUIS WIRTH, *On Cities and Social Life: Selected Papers*, edited by Albert J. Reiss Jr. 350 pp. University of Chicago Press, 1964. \$7.50.

THESE two volumes of selected papers of two pioneering American sociologists, part of the Heritage of Sociology series, will be of special interest to members of the American Studies Association. Although both Louis Wirth and William F. Ogburn had wide-ranging interests that drew them into comparative concerns, their focus was primarily on the United States and on the broad social changes occurring particularly since the end of the Civil War. Both men were deeply involved not only with social science at an abstract level, but also with the application of knowledge to resolution of some of the big and persistent public problems that emerged in unique form in the process of rapid social change such as occurred in America during the past century.

Both men, especially Wirth, were little disposed to build systems and develop comprehensive propositions about the social order. Both have had a profound influence on American sociology and on much of the current thinking about major issues. Ogburn, for example, was long preoccupied with the implications of technology for social change and social control. Wirth was especially concerned with the urbanization process and its implications for personal and social forms of encounter and adjustment. Neither Wirth nor Ogburn was disposed to venture very far from the concrete social facts at hand or capable of being developed. Their work has the ring of the short-term and the immediate about it. But, fortunately, it has also the possibility of relevant projection to some of the larger contemporary questions and experiences.

WILSON RECORD, *Southern Illinois University*

HAROLD AND JAMES KIRKER, *Bulfinch's Boston 1787-1817*. 305 pp. Oxford University Press, 1964. \$7.50.

WITH the free-ranging manner of an involved historian and the easy style of an informed reporter, the brothers Harold (of Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and James Kirker (free-lance writer) reconstruct and explain the social, economic, political and cultural history of a conservative, relatively homogeneous provincial capital and her gentleman-architect and political servant, Charles Bulfinch.

This book will undoubtedly interest American Studies scholars both for its subject matter and its methodology. Little of Boston's Federal period appears to be left untouched: political theories, economic developments, religion, the theater, medicine and conservative intellectual and artistic life. And Bulfinch's special contributions to architecture and town planning as well as to municipal administration are vital elements of the historical portrait (he was for two decades Selectman and Chief of Police, concerned with fire, safety and health regulations, with the enforcement of the "blue laws," with inspection of prisons, schools and civic buildings). Almost as background, a variety of small and major controversies are dramatized in an anecdotal way; to note only a few—the paradoxical triumph of the propertied conservative merchant-class counterrevolutionaries over the revolutionary Sons of Liberty; the failure of Boston Anglicans "to break the Congregational stranglehold on the religious life of Massachusetts"; the post-Revolutionary war of architectural styles, colonial or "sterile" Palladian traditions finally giving way to Bulfinch's neoclassicism introduced from London.

Concepts familiar in American Studies appear with kaleidoscopic frequency, including an anti-Turner thesis, the cultural lag, the microcosm, the Protestant ethic, the Great Chain of Being, agrarian vs. urban values, environmental determinism. These are minor motifs within a chronological narrative reconstructed from both contemporary manuscripts, newspapers, biographies, town records and from recent books of history and architecture. The account is supplemented by an inside-cover map of the architect's Boston and by twenty-four fine period illustrations of paintings and drawings as well as special photographs taken of Bulfinch structures still extant. The result is a pleasant and richly informative social history.

VIRGINIA J. ROCK, *Michigan State University*

CHARLES W. AKERS, *Called unto Liberty: A Life of Jonathan Mayhew, 1720-1766*. xiv, 285 pp. Harvard University Press, 1964. \$6.50.

Called unto Liberty begins as a well-written but typical biography of a colonial minister—genealogy, Harvard years, the joy and then repugnance for the Great Awakening, the inevitable search for a pulpit. From there on, however, Mayhew's life became significantly unconventional as he touchily and increasingly rejected all religious and political claims to sovereign authority and power. Arminian and republican, Mayhew's *Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission* (1750) gained him international attention and—in liberal quarters—respect. Mayhew therefore offers Professor Akers an excellent focus for a review of eighteenth-century

Anglo-American relations, the movement from Puritanism to Arminianism to Unitarianism, and the intellectual and emotional preparation for revolution that Americans underwent, largely at Mayhew's hands. Tracing his reputation in the Boston press, in an impressive array of private papers and in Mayhew's sermons, Akers carefully unravels Mayhew's political philosophy, his relationship with Thomas Hollis and his progressive antagonism to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and episcopacy in America (discreetly expanding Carl Bridenbaugh's *Mitre and Sceptre*), delineating Mayhew's place in the general American "transfer of religious fervor into political channels."

Extensively and usefully annotated, this biography is nonetheless uneven: the Briant-Edwards relationship would have gained from Louis Tucker's *Puritan Protagonist*, and one misses any mention of George Sensabaugh's careful study of Mayhew's stylistic reliance upon Milton in *Milton in Early America*. Moreover, Mayhew appears, especially in the early chapters, almost simultaneously in contrary stances, without any explanation from Professor Akers, and one soon discovers that the biographer treats politics with much fuller appreciation and understanding than he does theology. But on the whole this is a reliable and interesting book, a grateful addition to our understanding of a vigorous mind in critical times.

NORMAN S. GRABO, *University of California, Berkeley*

JOHN PEARCE, *American Painting 1560-1913*. 48 pp. with 24 color slides. McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964. \$8.95.

As all historians should know, it is far more difficult to describe the quick than the dead. If painting in America had come to an end, its rise and fall might be chronicled with a certain accuracy. But we live—to the embarrassment of all those who believe in final judgments—in an era of surprises. Now that the abstract expressionists have achieved a reputation greater than that granted Whistler in his lifetime, and Pop Art is confusing critics the world over, we are not so certain of our opinions as in more tranquil times.

For that very reason this unpretentious short survey of what we now think of as the essential achievements of our painters is sure of a generous welcome. Here are, besides, 24 color slides ranging from the *De Peyster Boy* in the New-York Historical Society to Childe Hassam's *Union Square*. We might wish for a slide of Benjamin West, but he has not been neglected; there is a two-page spread of his *Death of Wolfe* in black and white to remind us that he was "one of the two greatest American talents of the eighteenth century."

Only a pedant could quarrel with Mr. Pearce's emphasis, or with his selection of the plates and slides. One question may be asked: was Whistler's relationship to America "one of rejection"? In the age of Rothko and Mathieu we might be wise to claim Whistler as one of the greatest of all American painters. Seventy-five or eighty years ago he was hinting at their most daring discoveries. Moreover, by proving that he could absorb and make his own the latest developments in European technique, he was perhaps the most challenging American of all.

WAYNE ANDREWS, *Archives of American Art*

JAMES M. MCPHERSON, *The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. 474 pp. Princeton University Press, 1964. \$10.00.

THIS is a brilliantly successful attempt at rescuing American abolitionists of the 1860s from that special limbo to which historians relegate figures who seem of no further use to them. Professor McPherson argues that the abolitionist movement of the post-Sumter era fully merits the rehabilitation he has undertaken. Its crusade, he reasons, reached the height of its power only when the program for Negro emancipation was achieved under the military pressures of war and the political pressures of Reconstruction. By 1870, when the Fifteenth Amendment became part of the Constitution, many of the measures abolitionists had first called for had been adopted by their radical brethren in the Republican Party: abolition itself, the enlistment of Negro soldiers, government assistance for the education of freedmen, the creation of a Freedman's Bureau, and the incorporation of the Negro's civil and political equality into the law of the land. Nowhere does the author suggest that the abolitionists did much more than serve as the conscience of the Republican Party. They could not, he says, "forge or control events," but at least they provided "an idealistic-moral-humanitarian justification" for the wartime and Reconstruction policies of the party.

Anyone acquainted with the inexhaustible, and in many instances badly catalogued, depositories of abolitionist documents and literature in this country must admire the painstaking research reflected in this product of passionate ratiocination and superbly controlled imagination. From letters, diaries, journals, speeches, pamphlets and newspapers, Professor McPherson has created a story in which the abolitionists of the 1860s are artfully employed as the writer's best witnesses to the plausibility of his thesis.

HERMAN BESELINK, *The Lawrenceville School*

ALAN GOWANS, *Images of American Living: Four Centuries of Architecture and Furniture as Cultural Expression*. xvii, 490 pp. J. P. Lippincott Company, 1964. \$16.50.

THIS is a unique study of American civilization, using as it does both architecture and furniture as its central evidence. It is a delight to read; and a first-rate classroom text. Elsewhere Dr. Gowans has written that "architectural history should be concerned not only with things, but with ideas, with all the factors—political, historic, economic, religious—that make buildings what they are. . . ." This civilized synthesis is exactly what he has achieved in this book. To his unique knowledge of North American architecture—unique because embracing comprehensively both Canada and the United States—he has added first-hand knowledge of furniture and décor derived from his teaching association with the Winterthur Museum of early American decorative and fine arts. The result is a forthright use of furniture and architecture as complementary witnesses of the "American Dream" as it has evolved from 1607 to 1964. The focus is clear: for example, the Greater New England cultural myth is firmly deflated.

Some one hundred fifty pictures skillfully secure the author's argument (although one Adamesque-Federal doorway example looks very twentieth-century revival). Many quotations from original design books and from contemporary observers, foreign and American, strengthen and enrich the text. The footnotes at the end of each chapter thus constitute an excellent chronological bibliography in American civilization.

Throughout this book one is aware of an original mind establishing a vision of American society that is at once personal and learned. The writing is fluent, witty—how rare in North American scholarship!—and thoughtful. Criticism of any such broad synthesis is easy and tempting. The fact remains that in years to come this publication will be seen as a major landmark in North American studies.

SCOTT SYMONS, Royal Ontario Museum, University of Toronto

FREDERICK FEIED, *No Pie in the Sky: The Hobo as American Cultural Hero in the Works of Jack London, John Dos Passos, and Jack Kerouac*. 95 pp. The Citadel Press, 1964. \$1.50.

THE "culture hero" subschool of literary criticism, subsidized for quite a number of years by Leslie Fiedler and other foundations, is still not out of business, judging from this recent work. Under the ablest and daringest mythopoetic critics the idea of a culture hero takes much imag-

inative persuasion to get across, but here we are dealing with an oversimplified thesis and a very short book based only on about twelve or so literary works. Sticky questions occur, such as why does Whitman receive only a fleeting reference or two, or why isn't more done with the three above-named writers, but perhaps this was part of Feied's strategy.

Drawing subtle distinctions between tramps, hoboes and "road kids" in the time of Jack London, Feied lays the groundwork for a treatment of the historic, sociological, economic, political and psychological aspects of "hobo literature" as represented by London, Dos Passos and Kerouac. London, Feied argues, was influenced by Darwin and Nietzsche, Marx and Engels, and was concerned with the socio-economic aspects of the rootless wanderers; Dos Passos (in *U.S.A.*) was concerned with the economic and political aspects; and Kerouac, whose characters (in *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums*) are afflicted with a spiritual restlessness, was concerned with the psychology of alienation or isolation. Kerouac's books, Feied finds, are distinguished from those of the earlier writers by a desire to evade "the hideous realities of their times." Agree with him or not, his monograph for all its narrow scope holds much of interest.

• SAMUEL I. BELLMAN, *California State Polytechnic College*

Hawthorne Centenary Essays, edited by Roy Harvey Pearce. 480 pp. Ohio University Press, 1964. \$7.00.

RATHER than supply critical introductions to volumes of the Centenary Edition of the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne, one of its principal editors has gathered into a single volume a variety of estimates by contemporary commentators who in chorus define Hawthorne's present stature. Following an introductory poem by Robert Lowell, the tales and romances are discussed in approximate chronological order by Terence Martin, Charles Feidelson, Marcus Cunliffe, Robert C. Elliott, Harry Levin and Edward H. Davidson. Next, Hyatt H. Waggoner, Daniel Hoffman, Mr. Pearce, Larzer Ziff, R. W. B. Lewis and Edwin Fussell deal with various phases of Hawthorne's art and substance. His reputation here and abroad, his value to collectors and the state of his text is then reviewed by Edwin H. Cady, Seymour L. Gross and the late Randall Stewart, Roger Asselineau, Matthew J. Bruccoli and Fredson Bowers. As an afterword, Lionel Trilling speaks perceptively of "Our Hawthorne." That finally is what the book entire is about. Its montage of critical sketches together reveal the affection and esteem in which Hawthorne is held by people who read him seriously today. Though not really so

"official" or definitive a series of statements as some of the essays, piously or even a little pontifically, seem to suggest, it nonetheless serves an important double function, presenting attitudes which other generations will find representative of ours and insights which may, more often than not, prove to have been humbly conceived and durable.

LEWIS LEARY, *Columbia University*

WENDELL HOLMES STEPHENSON, *Southern History in the Making: Pioneer Historians of the South*. x, 294 pp. Louisiana State University Press, 1964. \$7.50.

COMMUNITIES and institutions ordinarily are first celebrated by filio-pietistic historians who preserve old legends and create new ones in their eulogies. The next step in historiography is the collection and publication of source materials upon which rest the more critical treatments of later historians. The pioneer historians of the South studied by Prof. Stephenson belong to this latter group and date from the late nineteenth century and the first third of the twentieth. The author had already dealt with some of them in a previous book, *The South Lives in History*. In the volume under review only the introduction (containing good advice for graduate students) and two chapters are new; one on William A. Dunning, the other, "Twenty-five Years of Southern Historical Writing." The remaining chapters had appeared in various periodicals, beginning with "William Garrott Brown: Literary Historian and Essayist" (1946).

Professor Stephenson pays proper tribute to the work of Herbert Baxter Adams, at Johns Hopkins, in stimulating research into southern history. After the death of Adams, leadership in this field passed to Dunning at Columbia, whose many students were devoted admirers of his scholarship and personality. A colleague of Dunning, William P. Trent, had started out as a historian but gained greater distinction as a student of literature. John Spencer Bassett, formerly of North Carolina, and Trent from the University of the South, finding their environments too constricting, chose to leave for northern schools. Ulrich B. Phillips, of Georgia, also made his contribution to southern historiography while in a northern academic environment. They and others, notably Charles W. Ramsdell and Thomas M. Owen, pioneer archivist, gathered the bricks and built the structure of southern historiography to imposing proportions. That later scholars have transformed that structure is no reflection on the work of the pioneers. It was they who first peopled it with live and believable men.

MICHAEL KRAUS, *City College, New York*

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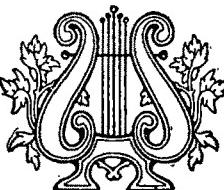
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American Calendar

Fall



1965

N. CALIF. On April 30 the Northern California chapter held a meeting at Mills College, in Oakland, dealing with modern music and modern art trends, both aspects of the subject being presented with illustrations. At the banquet preceding the meeting, attended by 60 people, the guests of honor were Russel B. Nye, ASA president, and Wilson O. Clough, ASA councilman for the Far West. Professors Nye and Clough were invited to a business session of the Northern California officers, and conferred informally with officers and members in both the Northern and Southern California areas. These areas, as well as that of the Pacific Northwest, remain relatively out of touch with national ASA activities, and members and officers are urged to communicate with the Executive Secretary on organizational issues.

NORTHWEST. The Washington State University subchapter of Pacific Northwest ASA met April 28 at Pullman, to review the work of

its first year. This work included the presentation of a public lecture and a series of seminar meetings with Henry Nash Smith, University of California at Berkeley, as well as a March meeting in which American Studies work in biography, and Owen Wister's literature of the West was analyzed. New officers for the group are Charles E. Blackburn, chairman; Marshall Gilliland, treasurer; and Jorgen Dahlie, secretary.

SEASA. The Florida members of the Southeastern chapter met at Stetson University, DeLand, Florida, for a two session meeting on March 12-13. The major purpose of the meeting was to exchange ideas and information about American Studies programs. The first session featured Nelson M. Blake, Syracuse University, who spoke on the character of American Studies programs in New York state. The second session, conducted by Arthur Thompson, director of American Studies at the University of

Florida, and John Hague, director of American Studies at Stetson, analyzed the problems involved in setting up and maintaining programs in different kinds of institutions.

LOWER MISS. The Lower Mississippi chapter has elected the following slate of new officers for 1965-66: Joseph P. Roppolo, Tulane University, president; Malcolm Magaw, Louisiana State at New Orleans, vice-president; and John Pilkington, University of Mississippi, treasurer.

ROCKY MT. The Rocky Mountain ASA held its spring meeting May 8 at the University of Colorado. Six papers on Willa Cather were presented at the all-day meeting: Joseph Gordon, Colorado College, "The Religious Values in Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*"; John Teeling, S.J., Regis College, "Willa Cather and the Church"; Courtland Auser, Air Force Academy, "Willa Cather's Frescos: Art Allusions with Reference to *Death Comes for the Archbishop*"; Maynard Fox, Fort Lewis College, "Order Versus Disorder in 'Tom Outland's Story' and *Death Comes for the Archbishop*"; Philip G. Vargas, University of Colorado, "Miss Cather's Treatment of the Indian"; and Vivian Mercier, CCNY, "Hagiography and *Death Comes for the Archbishop*." Newly elected officers are

Charles Nilon, University of Colorado, president; B. June West, Eastern New Mexico University, vice-president; Joseph Gordon, secretary-treasurer.

MICH. Michigan State University has been the scene of a great variety of ASA activity. At a conference on May 8, the MSU subchapter sponsored the following program: "The Problem of the White Man with respect to the Negro in America." Speakers were Louis E. Lomax, author of *The Negro Revolt* and *The Reluctant African*; Burton I. Gordin, Michigan Civil Rights Commission; Albert A. Blum, MSU; John O. Killens, author of *And Then We Heard the Thunder*; and G. Mennen Williams, Assistant Secretary of State. A panel discussion was moderated by Frederick Feied, chairman of the Conference Committee.

Four American Studies Seminars, open to the public, were staged on the MSU campus in April and May, featuring presentations by MSU faculty members Robert Wright, "Immigrant Folk Songs"; Jerry West, "J. D. Salinger's Search for a Christ Substitute"; Joseph Lee, "The Sino-American Confrontation"; and Frederick Feied, "John Steinbeck: the Dubious Battle."

The Michigan chapter of ASA met jointly with the Michigan Academy of Science, Arts and Letters March 19, at the University of Michigan. Among the papers

presented were: Maurice F. Brown, Oakland, "Mark Twain as Proteus"; Betty Chmaj, Detroit, "The White Liberal Problem"; John A. Forman, MSU, "Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 'Christian Realist' as Historian"; Leonard K. Eaton, Michigan, "The Early Clients of Frank Lloyd Wright: A Psychological Profile"; Daniel Walden, MSU, "Anti-Intellectualism and the Pastoral Vision from Jefferson to Wilson"; Don Hausdorff, MSU, "Art, Politics and Identity in the Modern Negro Novel"; and David Anderson, MSU, "Brand Whitlock's Search for the Jeffersonian Ideal."

Betty E. Chmaj, Detroit, conducted two 12-week lecture-seminar radio series in American Studies, in which radio listeners could enroll and thus participate. The first series was "Portrait of the American," the second was "The Mind of the South." Both were well supported. Another "first" for American Studies, as reported in the MSU-ASA newsletter of May-June 1965, edited by Gary Groat of MSU, is a 13-week radio series, also entitled "Portrait of the American," to be broadcast over 116 radio stations during 1965-66. It is an outgrowth of Dr. Chmaj's work, as is the formation of the Detroit Jazz Society.

Officers for 1965-66 in the Michigan chapter are Don Hausdorff, president; Dr. Chmaj, vice-president; and Frederick Feied, MSU, secretary-treasurer. Officers for the

MSU subchapter are Robert Fogarty, president; Milton Powell, vice-president; and John Ferres, secretary-treasurer. Professor Groat's newsletter is issued bimonthly and, in view of the surge of ASA activity in the area, should not lack for copy.

BAAS. The *Bulletin of the British Association for American Studies*, New Series, Number 9, December 1964, features the following articles: Alan J. Ward, University of Adelaide, "Immigration Minority 'Diplomacy': American Jews and Russia, 1901-1912"; Vivian Vale, University of Southampton, "English Settlers in Early Wisconsin: The British Temperance Emigration Society"; A. E. Campbell, Keble College, Oxford, "The Conditions of Isolationism"; Christine Avery, Bath Academy of Art, "Science, Technology, and Emily Dickinson"; and "Journal of the Reverend T. G. Selby Across the Continent 1877-78."

MID-CONT. New officers for the Midcontinent chapter are: Nicholas Joost, Southern Illinois University, president; Leon T. Dickinson, University of Missouri, vice-president; Jerzy Hauptmann, Park College, secretary-treasurer. The elections were held at the annual business meeting of the chapter April 3, at Southern Illinois University. Outgoing president John Q. Reed,

Kansas State College of Pittsburg, delivered an address entitled "The Minor Writer in American Studies."

HONORS. On May 31, Robert E. Spiller, University of Pennsylvania, chairman of the editorial board of *AQ*, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree by the University of Kiel. The citation emphasized Professor Spiller's long and prominent role as teacher and adviser in the development of American Studies in the universities of Germany and other countries, as well as his distinguished contribution as a literary historian.

IN BRIEF. The *Midcontinent American Studies Journal* of Fall 1965 is devoting a special issue to the study of the American Indian, under the co-editorship of Nancy O. Lurie, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and Stuart Levine, University of Kansas. . . . The Kyushu American Literature Society, of Kyushu University, Fukuoka City, Japan, has issued *Kyushu American Literature*, No. 8, containing six articles on American literature by Japanese scholars, as well as a list of Society members and an account of Society activities. . . . George Rogers Taylor, past president of ASA and the subject of dedication in the last issue of *AQ*, has been appointed Senior Resident Scholar of the Eleutherian

Mills-Hagley Foundation, in Wilmington, Del. He takes up his duties at the Foundation in October 1965. . . . To avoid missing deadlines for the Social Science Research Council-American Council of Learned Societies grants in Research Training Fellowships and Faculty Research Grants, interested parties should contact the SSRC at 230 Park Avenue, New York City, in October. . . . Robert H. Walker Jr., George Washington University, has been awarded an ACLS grant to work on a computer-stored bibliography in American Studies dealing with the literature of social awareness (1865-1917). . . . William R. Linneman, Illinois State University, has published, in the Spring 1965 *Satire Newsletter*, a satire on Alan Heimert's "Moby Dick and American Political Symbolism," which appeared in *AQ*, Winter 1963. . . . Jim Potter, London School of Economics, has published a report prepared under the sponsorship of the British Association of American Studies, *The Study of the U. S. A. in British Education 1963-1964*. . . . The American Studies Research Centre at Hyderabad, India, is now under the direction of William Mulder. . . . The Spring 1965 *Princeton University Library Chronicle* contains a 50-page bibliography on "Man and Nature in the New World: A Check List of the Writings of Gilbert Chinard." . . . R. F. L.

American Quarterly

VOLUME XVII

WINTER 1965

NUMBER 4

ALFRED L. ROE "Bankers & Thrift in the Age of
Affluence"

KERMIT VANDERBILT *The Undiscovered Country:*
Howells' Version of American Pastoral

JOHN L. THOMAS Romantic Reform in America,
1815-1865

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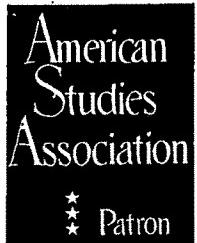
William & Jane H. Pease

AMERICAN CALENDAR

Newsletter of the American Studies Association

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American Quarterly

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American Quarterly

The aim of AMERICAN QUARTERLY is to aid in giving a sense of direction to studies in the culture of the United States, past and present. Editors and contributors therefore concern themselves not only with the areas of American life which they know best but with the relation of those areas to the entire American scene and to world society.

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ALFRED L. ROE
Western Washington State College

Bankers and Thrift in the Age of Affluence

AMONG THE HOMELY VIRTUES OF THE AMERICAN BUSINESS CIVILIZATION, thrift has shown unusual ability to be adjusted to suit new and changing conditions. In the processes of redefining thrift and of re-educating the public in its new applications so as to make it viable in affluent as well as pinched economies, the banking community has played an important role. Bankers have had an economic interest in the continuing vitality of the thrift impulse—only if people remain thrifty might they remain bank depositors. They have also had an emotional stake in the continuing validity of the idea of thrift—only if thrift continues to be regarded as moral can bankers pretend to the exalted role of apostles of thrift. Bankers, therefore, have sought when necessary to revise thrift to keep it a lively force.

The decade and a half between the Armistice and 1933 was an especially significant watershed in the history of American thrift. During this period, broad economic and intellectual changes came to a head which made a redefinition of the traditional virtue necessary. The long process of economic growth, the maturing of the economy and the return of prosperity after 1921 brought the highest-income society the world had ever known. A greatly expanded potential thrift market resulted, but the savings banker faced other claimants for the new incomes. The new business manager of a Fort Wayne, Indiana, bank regarded the 1920s as a "new era of competition for Mr. Average Man's dollars."¹ Whatever business consolidation brought, it was not an end to competition. The reaction of the Indiana banker was typical of others who were convinced they lived in a fiercely competitive world. Bankers fought each other for the average man's dollars. Together they struggled with other financial

¹ Wayne L. Thieme, "The 'New Business Problem' for the Average Sized Bank," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXVII (Aug. 1928), 233.

intermediaries—insurance companies, savings and loan associations and the stock market—which offered the public forms of saving more glamorous and profitable than the old thrift deposits. Higher incomes, however, can be spent as well as saved, and the 1920s marked the beginning of the age of high mass-consumption in the history of the American economy.² Bankers had to worry about the new consumer goods, too. They were marketed with modern advertising, sales promotion and consumer credit techniques, and offered an entirely new threat to traditional habits of thrift. Bankers were forced to adjust thrift to the consuming and investing habits of the new economic society. They also had to redefine thrift to bring it into harmony with modern patterns of thought.

Three principal bodies of thought affected the nature of the idea in the 1920s: the paradox of thrift, scientific management and the orthodoxy of thrift. Well before the coming of the depression, some social critics believed that because of basic structural changes in the economy the practice of thrift would bring economic disaster rather than prosperity. The paradox of thrift, assuming that consumption expenditures had replaced investment as the dynamic of the mature economy, questioned the wisdom of being thrifty. While the paradox of thrift was casting doubt on the validity of the old virtue, another body of thought offered hope for redefinition. This group of ideas, scientific management,³ assumed that man could substitute mastery for drift in the conduct of his life and supplied an intellectual basis for constructing a new thrift based on the planned management instead of the hoarding of incomes. Finally, the fundamentalists of thrift continued to preach an orthodox gospel of morality, character building and self-denial seemingly better suited to the nineteenth century than to the New Era.

The old-fashioned thrift, despite its horse and buggy design, remained an element of the bankers' creed throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s. Orthodoxy was never wholly rejected. Those bankers who constructed a new thrift subordinated the old creed to newer ideas, but still retained it. Other bankers continued to award the old values primacy. The veneration which continued to be accorded this style of thrift is typified by the address of a Pittsburgh banker, A. C. Robinson, who thundered out at the 1931 American Bankers Association convention: "Fundamentally thrift is an expression of good morals . . . it is the practical and visible

² Walt Whitman Rostow, *The Process of Economic Growth* (2nd ed.; New York, 1962), p. 324.

³ The term "scientific management" is not used here to denote a highly technical and rigorously defined body of thought. Rather, "scientific management" is used in the sense of the connotations it held for many New Era bankers who believed enthusiastically, almost rapturously, that scientific human intelligence could devise laws capable of beneficently ordering every phase of individual and social life.

evidence of a state of mind directed by good morals." "Bankers," Robinson added, ". . . are the outstanding apostles of thrift."⁴ To fundamentalists of thrift who preached a frugal life, the precrash 1920s were years grown fat and besotted with luxuries, but the old thrift made something of a comeback with depression. A Los Angeles banker claimed, for example, that the events of 1929 and 1930 had exposed the New Era attack on thrift as glib and false. Almost welcoming the depression in its early months, the fundamentalists of thrift claimed that the cause of economic chaos was not too much thrift but rather too little. Walter H. Bennett, president of New York's Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank, wondered if depression visited the land because bankers had betrayed their faith and had failed to preach the gospel of thrift forcefully enough to keep savings away from the stock market.⁵ A. C. Robinson, with postdepression hindsight, saw the 1920s as bad years—years marked by excessive prosperity, a denial of the virtue of thrift, the loosening of morals and an increase in crime. He felt a return to the tested virtues of an earlier day in order.⁶

Economic interest offers an explanation for the tenacity with which some bankers clung to the old-style thrift. Only if the nation's thrift impulse remained healthy would bankers be able to hold and increase savings deposits, the raw material from which a bank earns its profits. In a broader application of self-interest, bankers believed that a thrifty society was a society in which the masses would be schooled in the truths of sound economics, politics would be tranquil, and propertied interests would be secure. In spite of all this, self-interest alone cannot explain the hold that the old-style thrift continued to have on the minds of some bankers.

There is no doubt that, within limits, bankers believed what they said about the moral nature of thrift. Although advertising men, the cynical realists of the business world, employed terms such as "inspirational," "heart throb," or "scare copy" to describe thrift advertising, their banker employers used terms with far different connotations.⁷ A single sentence from the *Bulletin* of the California Bankers Association reflects the spirit of the moralist: "Bankers who preach the gospel of savings are interested in National Thrift Week which each year begins January 17, the birthday of Benjamin Franklin, the American apostle of thrift."⁸ The banker

⁴ "The Moral Values of Thrift," *American Bankers Association Journal*, XXIV (Oct. 1931), 209, 210.

⁵ Allan Herrick, "The Attack That Failed," *A.B.A. Journal*, XXIV (July 1931), 5-6, 47-48; "Thrift in Its Modern Phase," *A.B.A. Journal*, XXIII (April 1931), 853.

⁶ Robinson, *A.B.A. Journal*, XXIV, 209-11, 285-86.

⁷ For such attitudes among advertising men see the "How Banks Are Advertising" section in the *Bankers' Magazine*, CXX (Mar. 1930), 426; CXXV (Sept. 1932), 298; CXXII (Feb. 1931), 261-70; CXXV (Aug. 1932), 179-86; T. D. MacGregor, *MacGregor's Book of Bank Advertising* (New York, 1927), p. 147.

⁸ "National Thrift Week," *California Bankers Association Bulletin*, Dec. 1926, p. 570.

was an apostle, not a priest, and the message was a gospel, not a dogma; the mission was therefore evangelical. Had the bankers been speaking to the public, the sincerity of their rhetoric might be questioned, but they were speaking to each other. Doubtless it was part of a ritual by which bankers sought to reassure themselves that their horse-and-buggy stand on thrift was actually valid. No matter that they were scorned during the 1920s: part of the *esprit de corps* which permits a group to retain its self-image is a sense of alienation. Intellectuals, soldiers, even bankers somehow draw strength from feeling that they stand alone and embattled in defense of an unthinking, unreasoning and ungrateful nation.

Having been called to serve as an apostle of thrift, the old-style banker was assigned a role which defined his image and his conduct. Although there was a good deal that was anachronistic in the role, there was also much of the honorable. The fundamentalist of thrift viewed himself as a trustee of other people's money, and he regarded thrift deposits (the painfully accumulated savings of the industrious poor) as possessing special sanctity.⁹ Thrift also defined an ideal lending policy—loans should be made only cautiously and for productive purposes, never to consumers for the purchase of luxuries. A no-sayer to the material desires of men, the lot of the conservative banker during the New Era was described by H. L. Mencken as "the immensely painful one of a good Presbyterian in Hollywood."¹⁰ The New Era was not an age which cared to live with Calvinist restraint.

A pulse enabling bankers to gauge the continuing health of the thrift impulse during the 1920s was provided by the statistics compiled by national and state banking authorities on the number of savings depositors and the amounts of new and total deposits.

At the end of 1925, W. Espey Albig, deputy-manager of the A.B.A.'s Savings Bank Division, cheerfully noted that although gains in savings were uneven from one part of the country to another, thrift was still virile: saving was keeping pace with business. By 1926 and beyond, however, it was apparent that something was wrong. Savings were no longer growing as fast as national income.¹¹

There was much that was wondrous in the new economic era, but bankers also learned that new economic patterns endangered thrift and

⁹ To some extent, the Banking Act of 1933, which was enacted into law at the end of the New Deal's One Hundred Days, represented a triumph of the old thrift virtues over the worldliness of the New Banker. This is true, at least, of the sections separating commercial from investment banking and segregating thrift deposits.

¹⁰ Cited in American Bankers Association, *Constructive Customer Relations* (New York, 1933), pp. 22-23.

¹¹ "Savings Accounts Grow in Size and Amount," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Dec. 1925), 421-22; "Slight Gain in Savings During 1926," *A.B.A. Journal*, XIX (Dec. 1926), 452, 454; "Harvesting the Thrift Crop," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXIV (May 1927), 708.

the banker's historic place in the American economy. Two principal economic dangers, the installment plan and the stock market, were singled out in the 1925 resolutions of the Savings Bank Division of the A.B.A., which suggested that bankers urge their depositors to limit their purchases under deferred payment plans and warn them of the dangers involved in purchasing speculative corporate securities.

Of the two, the installment plan, since it promoted the widespread consumption of luxuries, seemed the more insidious threat to the thrift of self-denial and became a common theme for articles in bankers' periodicals and addresses at bankers' conventions; the *Bankers' Magazine* reported that installment selling was the most popular of all topics on the agenda of the 1926 conventions.¹² Writers and speakers called attention to the unscrupulous advertising and financing methods adopted by the installment seller which wiped out wage earners' "savings margins"—radios were advertised for as little as \$1.00 a week, furniture could be purchased with nothing down on an eighteen-month contract. The villains of the new style of living were not hard to identify: they were the luxuries that had come to be seen everywhere. A children's play, designed to warn pupils in the Los Angeles schools of the danger of luxurious living, told of the battles "American Mother" fought against "Luxury, Extravagance, Lolly Popp, Candy Barr, Chewing Gumm, and Movie Mad." In the play, the villainous luxuries were sentenced to death for waylaying the son of American Mother on his way to the savings bank. Arthur Henry Chamberlain, chairman of the committee on thrift education of the National Education Association, listed the sources of waste in personal budgets, a strange mixture of luxuries and goods which have since come to be considered integral parts of an affluent, consumer oriented society: intoxicating liquors, tobacco, jewelry and plate, automobiles, confectionery, soft drinks, tea and coffee, millinery, patent medicines, chewing gum.¹³

While high-pressure salesmen were undermining the average American's sales resistance, heretical thinkers planted doubts in his mind as to the intellectual basis of thrift. Various pre-Keynesian writers developed the paradox of thrift: the argument that thrift would lead to a diminution of economic activity, to unemployment and depression rather than to prosperity. This was a hoary, if not always respectable, doctrine used by Uriel H. Crocker as early as the 1870s and still the subject of discussion

¹² "California Bankers' Convention," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXIII (Aug. 1926), 258-59.

¹³ John A. Goodell, "Thrift Movement Tackles Problem of Reckless Spending," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXVI (Jan. 1928), 125-26; O. R. Johnson, "Wage Earners' Debts and the Savings Margin," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXI (July 1925), 9-14; Arthur H. and James F. Chamberlain, *Thrift and Conservation: How to Teach It* (Philadelphia, 1919), p. 37; Carobel Murphey, *Thrift Through Education* (New York, 1929), pp. 133-45.

on the eve of the New Era. Harold G. Moulton, economist at the University of Chicago and president of the Brookings Institution, questioned the virtue of thrift in a controversial article in the 1918 volume of the *Journal of Political Economy*. The idea descended to the popular level for debate in mid-decade when Garet Garrett wrote a serialized attack on thrift for the *Saturday Evening Post*. Garrett asserted that the old copybook maxims of thrift, though guides to the good life in the days of Benjamin Franklin, could be the source of tragedy in the 1920s.¹⁴

Bankers responded to these attacks on thrift in various ways. Some roared back with moral indignation that the old thrift still lived and continued to offer the best guide to individuals in ordering their lives. Although elements of the old morality eventually were salvaged, bankers generally found it necessary to revise the cluster of ideas comprising thrift to bring it into harmony with the modern intellectual and economic environment.

This revision was carried out by numerous bank advertising men and new business managers who, in their quest of the savings dollar, sought to design thrift advertising which would appeal to the mind and desires of the 1920s. To some extent they operated as individual representatives of isolated and competing banks, but they also were members of a community defined by common problems and exposed to the same ideas exchanged through common membership in the Financial Advertisers Association and common readership of the advertising suggestions contained in specialized publications such as the *Bankers' Magazine* and the *Journal of the American Bankers Association*.¹⁵

Through the unity given by such professional association, bankers slowly pieced together a new thrift. To be acceptable to the banking community, it had to contain ideas capable of serving the two principal interests the old thrift had furthered—increasing the profits of banks and creating a stable political society. At the same time the new thrift had to define a new role for the apostles of thrift that was as honorable as the old. To be effective in these purposes, the revised thrift had to fit the consumption patterns and needs of the modern economy and had to be grounded in the conventional wisdom of the 1920s.

Bankers were subject to the principal intellectual trends of their cul-

¹⁴ Uriel H. Crocker, *Excessive Savings a Cause of Commercial Distress: Being a Series of Assaults Upon Accepted Principles of Political Economy* (Boston, 1884); Harold G. Moulton, "Commercial Banking and Capital Formation, IV," *Journal of Political Economy*, XXVI (Nov. 1918), 849-81; the *Saturday Evening Post* articles were reprinted in book form: Garet Garrett, *The American Omen* (New York, 1928), pp. 78-82.

¹⁵ To a large extent, the role of bank advertisers was passive: the new meanings they gave thrift were originally forced on them by the publics with which they communicated. However, their role also had its active aspects.

ture, and ideas currently fashionable within the banking community shaped the revised thrift. Central among the ideas dominating the imagination of New Era bankers was scientific management. One of the crucial ruling assumptions of twentieth-century American social thought was the idea that scientific, human intelligence was capable of formulating laws with which man could control his earthly destiny. In business and in banking, this assumption manifested itself in the scientific management movement; in the intellectual world, it was readily apparent in the new social sciences; and in politics, the dream of directed control led to proposals for government planning and regulation of economic life.¹⁶ The implications of this body of thought for thrift are most apparent in the "gospel of efficiency" which served as the rationale for the conservation movement. According to the gospel of efficiency, resources should neither be wasted nor hoarded; rather they should be *used* in a rationally controlled manner.¹⁷

Operating within this cultural milieu, bankers reconstructed the intellectual basis of thrift. To rid thrift of its bad image, they said that the skinflint was not its true practitioner but instead the man who adopted "good management of the business of living." Planned or scientific management of fiscal matters was gradually manifesting itself in business and government through the adoption of cost-accounting and formalized budgets, and it was only natural that the business oriented apostles of thrift recommend similar techniques for the planned control of family incomes and expenditures. The thrifty man in the age of scientific management did not skimp or hoard; rather, he planned and controlled the *use* of his financial resources. The family budget allotted amounts computed with exact precision to subsistence, pleasures, investment and, above all, to saving.¹⁸

Scientific management stood foremost among the ideas of the new thrift of the 1920s, but thrift did not rest on it alone. The creed adopted by Roosevelt High School of Seattle illustrates the diverse nature of the intellectual foundation of thrift. It was a cacophony of the old-fashioned morality of thrift, scientific management, the gospel of efficiency, status

¹⁶ See Samuel Haber, *Efficiency and Uplift: Scientific Management in the Progressive Era, 1890-1920* (Chicago, 1964); Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform* (Vintage ed.; New York, 1956); John Morton Blum, *The Republican Roosevelt* (Cambridge, 1954).

¹⁷ Samuel Hays, *Conservation and the Gospel of Efficiency* (Cambridge, 1959), pp. 2, 122-27, 267.

¹⁸ Roy G. Blakely, ed., "The New American Thrift," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, LXXXVII (Jan. 1920), 1-8, 65-70; Los Angeles Banks School Savings Association, *Thrift in Education* (Los Angeles, 1931), p. 11 and *passim*; Bruce Davenport, "Teaching the Young How to Manage Money," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Mar. 1926), 632, 648-49.

quo conservatism, patriotism and the get-up-and-go hustle of the New Era salesman.

We Believe in the Habit of Thrift Because:

- 1) It is the foundation of a strong character in that it builds up self-denial, will power, and self-confidence.
- 2) It promotes the growth of individual industry and responsibility.
- 3) It calls for intelligence in spending and results in scientific management of one's personal affairs.
- 4) It develops forethought and removes one of the greatest causes for worry.
- 5) It establishes for the thrifty person a reputation for intelligence, diligence, and dependableness.
- 6) It puts one in line for the best positions.
- 7) It enables one to seize business opportunity when it comes.
- 8) It secures great and better planned pleasures.
- 9) It makes one a benefactor to society, not a beneficiary.
- 10) It assures national stability, prosperity, and happiness.¹⁹

Expanding and redefining thrift to incorporate new ideas was relatively easy; adjusting it to the economic society of the installment plan involved pain. Many bankers found it impossible to overcome deeply ingrained beliefs that only the immoral would extend bank credit for the purchase of automobiles, phonographs, radios, washing machines, refrigerators and other luxuries. Although George W. Norris, governor of the Philadelphia Federal Reserve bank, conceded that installment selling might have its place, he was still disturbed because it was "at variance with old-fashioned ideas of thrift."²⁰ Alex Dunbar, vice-president and cashier of the Bank of Pittsburgh, made no concessions to the advocates of the installment plan. Dunbar charged any businessman who, lusting for profits, perverted the people's thrift impulse "by unwise fanning of natural desires for possession [with being], an *economic traitor* to his country."²¹

Economic traitors who persuaded the people to mortgage the future so that they might enjoy a present rich in consumer goods operated within

¹⁹ Murphrey, *Thrift Through Education*, frontispiece. The Los Angeles schools also adopted a thrift creed: "Patriotism: I believe in the United States of America. I believe that her progress depends upon the Industry and Thrift of her people. Punctuality: Therefore, I will devote my time to worthwhile activities and Save Time by being punctual. Physical Training: I will Preserve my Health because without it I have less earning power. Conservation: I will Conserve Materials because materials Cost Money. Thrift: I will Save my Money, because saving leads to security, helpfulness, and happiness. I Will Do All These Things for the Welfare of America." Los Angeles Banks School Savings Association, *Thrift in Education*, p. 6.

²⁰ "The Recent Great Extension of Instalment Selling," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Mar. 1926), 636.

²¹ "Installment Buying," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXIII (July 1926), 79. Dunbar's italics.

the framework of merchandising capitalism during the prosperous years of the 1920s. With depression, such treason became the stock in trade of politicians. To the fundamentalist of thrift, the New Era and the New Deal were only variants of a groundless spend-yourself-into-prosperity theory, the New Deal only a revived and nationalized installment plan. The thrift conscious editor of *Bankers' Magazine*, for example, regarded the economic doctrines of John Maynard Keynes as a proof "that the 'new economic era' still endures in the minds of many."²² Another banker who fought both New Era and New Deal was Orval Adams, who won for himself a small place in American history when he suggested in 1937 that bankers use their control of credit to force more conservative policies on Franklin Roosevelt. In his highly regarded history of the New Deal, William Leuchtenburg treats Adams' recommendation solely as an evidence of business opposition to the political philosophies of Franklin Roosevelt.²³ But Adams, suffering from delusions as to the power bankers held, had earlier opposed the discounting of prosperity by business as well. During a 1927 savings conference at which the relationship of installment credit to thrift was discussed, Adams proposed that banks force more conservative policies on the finance companies. In the slump year of 1930, Adams felt that the wisest policy for business was retrenchment and the most pressing need of the consumer was sales resistance. Once again, he suggested that bankers utilize their control over credit to guarantee such actions.²⁴ Adams and Dunbar were conservatives, but not solely conservative in the sense of the businessman who opposes big government. Theirs was the conservatism of the old-style apostle of thrift.

Not all bankers were conservative after the fashion of Adams and Dunbar, and those prepared to liberalize thrift sought ways in which saving could make its peace with the consumer society. Inevitably, settlement involved surrender for the thrift of self-denial: indeed, thrift came to be justified by consumption. Instead of calling for a rejection of luxuries, bankers recommended thrift as the best way to acquire the goods of the new consumer society. One banker noted that the technique of the religious exhorter had changed from stressing the pain of hellfire and brimstone to pointing out the positive delights that the Christian life offered in the here and now and urged a similar updating of the homiletics of thrift. Since he considered the average wage earner mentally incapable of considering his condition two or three decades in the future, he recommended that thrift advertising should not dwell on the hellish

²² "The Sin of Saving," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXXII (Mar. 1931), 298.

²³ *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal, 1932-1940* (New York, 1963), p. 177.

²⁴ "Want a Better Run Bank?" *A.B.A. Journal*, XIX (Apr. 1927), 747, 775; "Thrift, Hope, and Greater Sales Resistance," *A.B.A. Journal*, XXIII (Nov. 1930), 447, 483.

miseries of a penniless old age. The thrifty man, such advertising taught, was the man who enjoyed the new consumer society to the fullest. He owned his own home, drove an automobile and traveled to Europe.²⁵

Once bankers had redefined thrift in a way that implicitly granted approval to consumer goods, it was but a short step to making installment loans themselves. Scientific management, as plastic a notion as the idea of thrift, offered the intellectual justification for this break with the past. The scientific banker could deal with the question of installment loans in only one way: the subject must be studied, statistics gathered and "a scientific formula for installment selling" developed.²⁶ At the 1926 A.B.A. convention, the Association's prestigious Economic Policy Commission, which studied questions of broad significance to the banking community and the economy, devoted its entire report to installment credit. Accepting it as a normal ingredient of the economy, the Commission recommended that bankers develop certain standards to ensure that installment credit be freed from the possibility of individual abuse and danger to the economy as a whole. This could be accomplished by developing scientific formulas which called for investigation of the loan applicant and regulated the size of the down payment and the length of the amortization period.²⁷

Once bankers were satisfied they had developed adequately scientific standards for installment credit, they began making loans directly to consumers as well as attempting to impose standards on the finance companies which acted as middlemen in channeling bank credit to consumers.²⁸ In 1920 a Bridgeport, Connecticut, bank began making small loans to individuals; four years later, in Jersey City, a bank opened what was described as the first separate small-loan department in a commercial bank; and in late 1925 a Louisville institution established a consumer-loan department with a branch office in a department store.²⁹ But it was

²⁵ W. R. Morehouse, "Thrift in Its True Setting," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVII (July 1924), 67-68, 109-11; Guy Cooke, "Thrift No Longer Sells Itself," *A.B.A. Journal*, XXII (Mar. 1930), 1061-62, 1084; Allan F. Wright, "Save-to-Travel—The New Banking Program," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXI (Sept. 1925), 329-38; George Woodruff, "Why We Are Using Department Store Advertising," *Bankers' Magazine*, CX (Apr. 1925), 668-69, 671-72.

²⁶ John H. Puelicher, "The Installment Credit Need," *A.B.A. Journal*, XX (June 1928), 964.

²⁷ "A Word of Caution on Installment Selling," *A.B.A. Journal*, XIX (Nov. 1926), 280.

²⁸ "Automobile Finance Companies Meet," *Bankers' Magazine*, CX (Jan. 1925), 203; Bruce Davenport, "Financing the Sale of Used Cars," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVII (June 1925), 741-42, 772-73; Glen Griswold, "Putting the Brakes on Automobile Partial Payment Paper," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Dec. 1925), 400; William Hayes, "Should Banks Attempt to Regulate Automobile Financing?" *Bankers' Magazine*, CXII (Feb. 1926), 238-40.

²⁹ Evans Clark, *Financing the Consumer* (New York, 1931), pp. 75-76; Bruce Davenport, "Small Loans to Finance the Installment Buyer," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Nov. 1925), 312, 384; John C. McNeil, "An Industrial Loan Department for a Commercial

the entry of the giant National City Bank of New York "into the almost untilled field for credit" which, according to *Bankers' Magazine*, marked "a new era."³⁰ The National City and its executive head, Charles Mitchell, perhaps more than any other bank in the country symbolized the changes taking place in American banking during the 1920s. Its action, announced with newspaper publicity in record quantities, dramatized and popularized consumer credit as a proper field for respectable bankers.³¹

Bankers were forced to modernize thrift concepts partly because of the competition of the new consumer goods. Other pressures came from Wall Street, which offered an allure that the old-style thrift, plain and sternly Victorian, could not match. A cartoon in the *Journal of the American Bankers Association* pictured a meek American wage earner dutifully and faithfully strolling with his wife, a lantern-jawed heavyweight labeled "systematic savings," but wistfully ogling an appealing flapper, "common stocks." Many bankers assumed this attraction was one explanation for the decline in the rate of growth of savings deposits, but not all were alarmed. A savings bank executive, for example, felt widespread participation in the stock market good in that it showed that "the average American is learning how to make the dollar hustle." To satisfy this new public desire and to meet the competition of other financial intermediaries, he recommended that bankers show "every individual how he can become a J. P. Morgan and build up a fortune through safe and conservative investment."³²

Pushed by the public's desire to make the dollar hustle and drawn by a new potential source of profits, bankers expanded the idea of thrift to include worldly and sophisticated forms of investment unknown to the old apostles of thrift.³³ To some extent, bankers merely exploited the decade's infatuation with the stock market to build regular savings ac-

Bank," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Feb. 1926), 547, 575; "Louisville National Has Branch in Department Store," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXI (Nov. 1925), 806; "A New Plan for Small Loans," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXV (Aug. 1927), 220-21.

³⁰ John Walker Harrington, "Big Banks and Small Personal Loans," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXVI (June 1928), 895.

³¹ Clark, *Financing the Consumer*, p. 75; "New Small Loan Plan Spreads," *A.B.A. Journal*, XX (June 1928), 962. It was not, however, until the post-1945 period that bank loans in this area reached sizable proportions.

³² John J. Pulley, "Making the Dollar Hustle," *A.B.A. Journal*, XX (Dec. 1927), 433, 434.

³³ The increasing importance of consumer credit and corporate securities were only parts of broad changes in the nature of American banking under way before the 1920s. Individual banks departed from functional specialization and became "department stores of finance." More banks opened savings departments, and savings deposits increased in importance relative to demand deposits. Commercial credit declined as investments in securities and real estate loans increased.

counts: they counseled that disciplined thrift was the way to build a fortune. A Virginia bank, also among the pioneers in bank consumer credit, developed a plan which blended the installment plan and the savings account so that lower-income individuals could accumulate the funds necessary to purchase expensive corporate bonds. The depositor-purchaser made deposits in a savings account for periods of up to five years; when the required amount was on deposit, the money was withdrawn and the bond purchased.³⁴ Implicit in the Virginia plan, however, was the problem which forced bankers to assign corporate securities a definite and respectable place in the new thrift: once deposits reached a certain size, the money was withdrawn and placed where it would earn a higher return. Bankers partially met this problem by telling the public that family investment programs based on the new thrift—scientifically planned and balanced—should include corporate securities and various types of insurance, but only after the savings account had reached a sizable and permanent level. The Emigrant Industrial Savings Bank, for example, advertised that a minimum of six months' salary in the bank was necessary before other forms of investment should be made, and at the A.B.A.'s 1931 Eastern Regional Savings Conference, an advertising program educating the public in the necessity of maintaining three months' salary in the bank at all times was suggested.³⁵ Bankers also began to merchandise corporate stocks and bonds. By 1927 more than a hundred banks had opened bond departments, others established security affiliates which could deal in common stocks as well as bonds, and smaller banks acted as the agents of larger, urban banks.³⁶ All hoped to earn commissions by servicing the investment patterns of the new thrift.

The new thrift was well designed to serve the immediate economic interests of bankers. Advertising linked to consumer goods built savings accounts, loans to households earned good rates of interest and the merchandising of securities returned commissions. However, the old thrift did more than build business, and if the revised thrift of scientific management was to be wholly acceptable, it would also have to help protect the political interests of bankers.

The 1920s were generally confident years, but years nonetheless unset-

³⁴ "How Banks Are Advertising," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXIV (Apr. 1927), 613-16.

³⁵ Bruce Davenport, "A Savings Plan to Keep Money in the Bank," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (Aug. 1925), 80, 102; C. E. Auracher, "Living Insurance, A New Appeal in Savings Advertising," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXXIII (July 1931), 36-41; Virgil Allen, "A Savings Goal for Every Income," *Bankers' Magazine*, CXII (May 1931), 595-98.

³⁶ P. D. Houston, "Bond Departments and Investments," *A.B.A. Journal*, XIX (Nov. 1926), 315-16; William Nelson Peach, *The Security Affiliates of National Banks* (Baltimore, 1941).

tled by the persistent fear that economic illiteracy was widespread among the masses. New Era bankers remembered all too uncomfortably the challenge of 1896, the muckraking attack of the early part of the century and the progressive protest of the Roosevelt and Wilson years. Any tendency to postwar complacency was jolted by the great Red scare which left bankers with an uneasiness which, though declining in intensity after prosperity returned in 1922, persisted throughout the decade.

The apostles of thrift commanded a body of ideas and values which they felt well suited to preventing any recurrence of economic demagogry. The old thrift was especially useful in this regard—the thrift of character and self-denial was also the thrift of individualism and self-reliance—and the traditional ideas remained relatively more prominent when bankers were concerned with broadly political problems than with strictly business matters. Thrift, generally, was assumed to contribute to political stability by educating the masses in the truths of sound economics and, through their savings accounts, by giving them a stake in society.³⁷ Bankers also employed thrift to argue against specific legislative proposals such as government-sponsored old-age pensions and unemployment insurance. Rome Stephenson, in his address as incoming president at the 1930 A.B.A. convention, noted the disturbing presence of proposals for "some sort of insurance for the toilers, to cover periods of industrial inactivity." He recommended instead that the workers build savings accounts which, in the event of future depression, would become "the insurance policy payable on demand."³⁸

Scientific management contributed other ideas which could be used to achieve political tranquility. W. Espey Albig, an A.B.A. deputy-manager, sought to ground the need for widespread education in the new thrift, in the context of economic growth. As the industrial revolution reached its late-nineteenth-century phase in the United States, Albig argued, a national need for educated and skilled workers developed; the educational system was accordingly reformed to include vocational training. But industrial growth was a never-ending process, and as it proceeded into the twentieth century it brought forth ever new problems which demanded further reforms of American education. Albig reasoned that, if the social evils possible with higher wages, more leisure time, more consumer goods, high-pressure salesmen and the installment plan were to be effectively combatted, the laborer of the 1920s had to be educated in income management as well. "The whole matter as it concerns patri-

³⁷ Charles H. Deppe, "The Change of Aim of Savings," *A.B.A. Journal*, XVIII (July 1924), 18-19.

³⁸ "Banking Broadens Its Field," *A.B.A. Journal*, XXIII (Oct. 1930), 263; "The Dole by Any Name," *A.B.A. Journal*, XXIII (Apr. 1931), 817-18, 872-73.

otic Americans," Albig concluded, "simmers down to this simple proposition: Are we satisfied in this democracy to follow simply the European countries into the shadows—old-age pensions and unemployment doles—or do we rather prefer to continue to work for our people's personal independence, achieved through a knowledge of income management?"³⁹

William E. Knox, president of New York's Bowery Savings Bank and 1924-25 A.B.A. president, shared Albig's concern. Knox defined the manner in which the average American managed his income as the "one stern, practical question . . . perhaps the greatest social problem we have in the United States today." To solve the problem, Knox called for the development of a "science of saving" so that each worker could know with precision what he must save each week to be self-supporting upon retirement. Widely enough adopted, the science of saving would lessen the future tax load businessmen would have to bear by making government pension plans unnecessary. It would also have an impact upon immediate wage levels. Knox stressed that saving did not depend upon salary increases, indeed he believed it "impossible for most men to increase their real wages."⁴⁰ Income management, a wonderfully flexible notion, was thus made to serve the political interests of bankers. Central to the thrift of personal consumption and investment as well, it stood at the center of the new thrift that emerged from the 1920s.

The new thrift was far different from the old. In its synthesis of the frugal caution of the nineteenth century and the scientific enthusiasm of the 1920s, the latter dominated. Morality, however, remained important. The old ideas of frugality and self-reliance revived somewhat after depression created a situation where the thrift of individualism was politically useful and where bankers, ridden by guilt, repented their New Era departure from time-honored imperatives. But thrift in the late 1920s and early 1930s is misunderstood if too much weight is assigned to the platitudes of bankers inveighing against unemployment insurance. The altered role of the apostles of thrift illustrates more accurately the new thrift of scientifically managed incomes.

The apostle continued to sound clarion calls for self-denial, but his office came to include other functions. In the age of the consumer and the administrative expert, the apostle became a consulting engineer in the scientific management of family budgets. Approving the installment plan to purchase consumer goods, he sought to ensure that its use was tempered by scientific rules so that individuals would continue to lead

³⁹ "The Wide Scope of School Savings," *A.B.A. Journal*, XX (Nov. 1927), 336, 427.

⁴⁰ "A Savings Plan for Independence," *A.B.A. Journal*, XIX (Dec. 1926), 415; "Thrift Should be Made Part Basis for Salary Increases," *Bankers' Magazine*, CX (June 1925), 1109.

virtuous financial lives. The proper handling and care of money involved investments as well as expenditures. Accepting more widespread participation in the stock market, indeed proudly celebrating the democratization it allegedly brought society, the apostle of thrift also became an investment counsellor. Bankers educated the public in the intricacies of the securities markets, recommended prudent and profitable participation, and earned commissions by merchandising securities themselves. But in investments, too, there was need for planning, and bankers developed schemes calling for total investment programs which continued to assign an important role to the old-fashioned savings account.

Coming to terms with the new economy and rooted in modern patterns of thought, the new gospel represented a needed response to the twentieth century. There were, to be sure, imperfections in the new thrift. For some bankers, it provided a glib rationalization for speculation in the securities and real estate markets.⁴¹ For others, it conveniently concealed the low incomes of many Americans which, no matter how scientifically managed, prevented them from enjoying consumer durables or preparing for an independent old age. For most, the scientific management which lay at the base of the new thrift led to an unqualified optimism in man's mastery over his material fate that can most charitably be described as ludicrously quaint.

Nevertheless, the new thrift was necessary and in many ways healthy. If thrift was to continue to offer a guide to personal finance, it had to be expanded to include consumer goods and new types of investments. A thrift based on scientific management, though the idea had its pitfalls, offered a basis for the New Era's redefinition of thrift that was consistent with the intellectual revision of thought and values underway in other areas of American life. To William E. Leuchtenburg, the years between the war and the election of Franklin Roosevelt comprised a period in which Americans, with less than complete success, made their "first serious attempt . . . to make their peace with the twentieth century."⁴² The bankers' revision of thrift was a small part of this accommodation.

⁴¹ There are temptations to seek connections between the new thrift, numerous bank failures and causes of depression. The conclusions that can be reached are contrary. Insofar as "scientific formulas" for new types of loans only deluded bankers and government officials into believing unsound loans were safe, there were connections. Thrift advertising, furthermore, may have created more bank deposits than could safely be employed. If consumer expenditures were coming to be the dynamic of the new economy, on the other hand, economic health could not be achieved unless sound rules for installment credit were developed and applied. Nor could banks remain healthy unless they did develop new outlets for bank funds. The bankers' position in any case was a difficult one. Their pre-1929 lending policies were criticized for being too liberal and not meeting social obligations to depositors. Their post-1929 lending policies were criticized for being too stringent and not meeting social obligations to borrowers.

⁴² *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago, 1958), p. 11.

K E R M I T V A N D E R B I L T *
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The Undiscovered Country: Howells' Version of American Pastoral

"MY NOTION WAS NOT TO EXPLAIN ANYTHING IN MY STORY," HOWELLS WROTE as installments of *The Undiscovered Country* (1880) were appearing in *The Atlantic Monthly*.¹ He soon learned from friends and reviewers that his latest novel was largely a study of spiritualism. Consistent with his lifelong habit, Howells let his readers and critics have their way. T. W. Higginson was left to puzzle why Howells should have tried to revive an interest in the dying fad of spiritualism, and W. C. Brownell to pronounce the task hopeless. Howells was pleased to learn, however, that his novel had sold eight thousand copies the first month.² Apparently it accorded with the temper of 1880 in America. But sales quickly slackened. *The Undiscovered Country* soon was buried under the creative outpouring of Howells novels, farces and travel sketches which followed in the 1880s. In later decades, an occasional literary historian remarked in passing that among Howells' minor works lay the novel about spiritualism. In 1956, Edwin H. Cady called for a reinterpretation of this neglected novel. Two studies have since appeared. One reveals Howells' important psychological and technical debts to Turgenev. The other describes the story as an obsessive spiritual quest defeated by the stronger demands of the knowable, the earthly and the human heart.³

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¹ Letter to W. H. Bishop, Mar. 21, 1880, in *Life in Letters of William Dean Howells*, ed. Mildred Howells (Garden City, N. Y., 1928), I, 282.

² Howells noted the sales in a letter to E. C. Stedman, Aug. 1, 1880, in Butler Library, Columbia University. Higginson's review appeared in *Scribner's*, XX (Sept. 1880), 793-95, and Brownell's in *Nation*, XXXI (July 1880), 49-51.

³ See Cady, *The Road to Realism: The Early Years of William Dean Howells* (Syracuse, 1956), p. 197; Olov W. Fryckstedt, *In Quest of America: A Study of Howells' Early Development as a Novelist* (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 183-91; and George N. Bennett, *William Dean Howells: The Development of a Novelist* (Norman, Okla., 1959), pp. 97-105.

This recent attention paid *The Undiscovered Country* has not been misspent nor the claims overstated. This was to be Howells' first "big" novel, and when properly read, *The Undiscovered Country* becomes a considerable novel indeed. Howells labored four years with his growing conception of a New England story which could serve as an incisive portrait of an age. In late summer of 1875, he had written to Charles Dudley Warner concerning the nearby Shakers at Shirley, Massachusetts: "They present great temptations to the fictionist, and as Mrs. Howells has charged me not to think of writing a story with them in it, I don't see how I can help it."⁴ Six months later, however, he told Thomas Bailey Aldrich, "I am not writing one [story]," and added, in mock despair, that he planned to forfeit his *Atlantic* salary "if a plot doesn't come to me pretty soon. . . ."⁵ But he did write a nonfictional record of his previous summer for the June 1876 *Atlantic*.⁶ Shortly thereafter, the idea for the story which was to become *A Modern Instance* began to germinate. Howells wrote to Charles Eliot Norton that he had "begun that New Medea I once told you of."⁷ What appears to have happened was a significant cross-fertilization in the conception of two novels. Howells soon put aside his modern Greek tragedy in favor of the story of Egeria Boynton, the Shakers and spiritualism. By early 1878, he had completed a draft of *The Undiscovered Country* and sent it to T. S. Perry for criticism. After Perry's reading, Howells revised extensively, but did not complete the rewriting until after *The Lady of the Aroostook*, during the summer of 1879.⁸ In January 1880, the first installment of *The Undiscovered Country* appeared in the *Atlantic*, ushering in Howells' decade of great achievement as a novelist; and in 1881, he was at last able to write the long-delayed *A Modern Instance*.

In his original subject, Shakerism, Howells sensed the materials for a study of New England life in the 1870s which could mirror also the critical changes in American civilization at large. Spiritualism, skepticism, modern science, decline of the family unit, psychological disorders within the family, sexual repression (related to what James called America's salient "decline in the sentiment of sex")—all of these and other themes for a novel of postwar life appear to have grown out of the 1875 summer

⁴ Sept. 4, 1875, in *Life in Letters*, I, 209-10.

⁵ Mar. 3, 1876, letter in Houghton Library, Harvard University.

⁶ "A Shaker Village," XXXVII, 699-710. Further page references to this account of the 1875 summer at Shirley will appear in my text.

⁷ Sept. 24, 1876, *Life in Letters*, I, 227.

⁸ Mr. Fryckstedt notes that Perry, criticizing Howells' harsh portrayal of "Gifford," must have been reading an earlier, unrevised draft. Mr. Fryckstedt goes astray, however, by assuming that Gifford was Boynton (*In Quest of America*, p. 190). The revised manuscript in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, reveals that "Gifford" was shortened to "Ford" throughout.

experience among the Shakers, and demanded artistic form and expression. Howells partly solved the problem of form by centering his novel on a father-daughter-lover struggle which developed simultaneously as religious conflict and as sexual contention.⁹ Equally important, he discovered in the contending settings of city and country a unifying frame for the cultural dislocations of American life. From beginning to end, Howells achieved definitive expression of his themes by adopting the traditional mode of pastoral: civilized man's temporary reunion with nature whose powers restore him to physical, emotional and spiritual well-being. *The Undiscovered Country* as Howells' modern version of pastoral may well belong on the same shelf with *The Blithedale Romance*, *Winesburg, Ohio* and *The Sound and the Fury*.

Dr. Boynton, the frenzied convert to spiritualism, has dominated every important reading of *The Undiscovered Country*. This emphasis on Boynton as the all-important figure of the novel has necessarily raised serious questions about the unity of *The Undiscovered Country* and the focus of Howells' imaginative vision. One of Howells' best recent critics has charged that "we resent the shift of focus from Boynton to the rather pallid love affair of Ford and Egeria."¹⁰ But Howells' main concerns carried him well beyond the characterization of Boynton. A larger triangular conflict integrates Egeria and Ford in a broadly religious theme from first to last. The novel's religious action, viewed from this new perspective, will prepare the way to a complete reading of Howells' version of pastoral.

In the opening seven chapters of *The Undiscovered Country*, Howells introduces the religious conflict among the three main characters. The setting is not the rural village of the Shakers, but Boston and a spiritualist séance in an old prewar mansion. Mr. Boynton, ex-Calvinist and former practitioner of medicine in a Maine village, has turned spiritualist and come to Boston to practice his experiments in mesmerism and spirit-communication. His wife long since dead, he is accompanied by his nineteen-year-old daughter, Egeria, whom he has controlled and trained since childhood to serve as medium in his séances. Conflict develops at once in the opening chapter when the young Boston journalist Ford, an ex-

⁹ Howells may already have been developing this triangle in the abortive *A Modern Instance* in 1876, and realized that here was the breakthrough for the needed "plot" of the Shaker story. The incest motif in *A Modern Instance* is discussed in my "Marcia Gaylord's Electra Complex," *American Literature*, XXXIV (Nov. 1962), 365-74.

¹⁰ Fryckstedt, *In Quest of America*; p. 187. Mr. Bennett also considers Boynton's spiritualist monomania to be the problem of the novel. Mr. Bennett justifies the love affair and marriage of Ford and Egeria as an ironic counterpart to Boynton's dark obsession with the occult and unknowable (*William Dean Howells*, pp. 102-3).

villager become scientific skeptic, has felt himself drawn to attend the Boynton séance. Amid the confusion of table-rappings and apparent presence of spirit hands and voices; Egeria faints and Ford "reverently" carries the "pale phantom" maiden to her room, while Boynton, unconcerned over his daughter's health, remains behind to exult over this assumed contact with immortal spirits beyond the grave (p. 34).¹¹

Several days later, Ford returns to challenge Boynton's methods of solicitation. The conflict between the spiritualist and the scientist is now defined. Boynton and Ford, both deprived of the support of religious orthodoxy, have become seekers after tangible truth, verifiable in the present world. And Egeria, the "medium" or earthly avenue of revelation to knowable truth, has become a pawn in the conflict. Ford has already carried her off in symbolic rescue from her spiritualist father. Egeria soon confirms to her father that the young skeptic represents a presence inimical to her powers as a spirit-medium. Alerted to the danger, Boynton becomes determined to preserve Egeria from Ford's "noxious influence" (pp. 72-73).

Boynton plans to dispose of Ford by arranging a public séance which will serve as a "contest" between himself and his young rival. A fellow townsman of Boynton's named Hatch intervenes to extract from Ford a chivalrous vow not to accept Boynton's challenge—for Egeria's sake. Hatch simultaneously persuades the Boyntons that Mrs. LeRoy, their landlady, falsely produced the "materializations" at the recent séance and that Boston at large is a hostile environment for the seeker after spiritual reality. The Boyntons depart from Boston intending to return to Maine. The first part of the novel closes with Egeria's writing a farewell note to Ford. She is bewildered and upset by the ambiguous role she has been forced to play in the struggle between the two contentious men.¹²

¹¹ All page references to *The Undiscovered Country* in my text are taken from the 1880 Boston edition.

¹² Howells appears to have been far more ambivalent about spiritualism in the 1870s than one gathers from his unflattering treatment of Boynton in these early pages. Important evidence of his taking spiritualism seriously in these years is found in his letter to his father, Feb. 25, 1872, *Life in Letters*, I, 167; and Howells to Garrison, May 21, 1874, and Dec. 28, 1874, in Princeton University Library.

The portrait of Ford also suggests ambivalence, being more generous than Howells' recent comments on science in the *Atlantic* had been. The following unsigned reviews in the postwar decade touched on the regrettable influence of science upon religious faith, especially the belief in immortality: *Life of George Silliman*, XVIII (July 1866), 127; *The Open Polar Sea*, XIX (April 1867), 511, 512; *The Malay Archipelago*, XXIV (Aug. 1869), 256; *Alaska and Its Resources*, XXVI (Aug. 1870), 245; Morley's *Rousseau*, XXXII (July 1873), 105; Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens*, XXXIII (May 1874), 622; Holmes' *Songs of Many Seasons*, XXXV (Jan. 1875), 105. Still useful on Howells and science is Hannah G. Belcher, "Howells's Opinions on the Religious Conflicts of

In the second part of the novel, chapters eight through eleven, Boynton talks with two Shakers at the railroad station. In his excitement, he and Egeria subsequently board the wrong train, lose their baggage, and after a discouraging trek through the countryside, make their way to the Shaker village.

The final segment of the novel arrives at what had been the "germ" of the novel, an action set in the socialist, celibate Shaker community of rural Massachusetts. The religious argument continues, first between Boyton and the Shakers, and presently between Boynton and Ford. Egeria, again, is caught in the crossfire, though upon arriving at the Shaker village she has become bedridden with a severe fever. Boynton's main concern, however, is not his daughter's health but the mysteries of spiritualism, which he pursues among the Shakers. To this end Egeria is necessary to him, and he anticipates her return to health and the renewal of her powers as a medium. Her convalescence in the May sunshine and in walks through the countryside, however, subverts the delicate nervous equipment which her father had formerly controlled.

On a climactic evening, Boynton rebukes the Shakers both for abandoning their spiritualist beginnings and for sublimely withdrawing from a life of social action and earthly achievement. Then he proudly stages an exhibition of the powers which he believes have thrust him into the vanguard of spiritual reawakening in America. But the rejuvenated Egeria now fails to respond to his powers. A deranged Boynton discovers, the next morning, that his old scientist rival, Ford, had arrived by chance the previous evening. Boynton angrily attacks Ford as the skeptical influence who caused Egeria's failure the night before. Boynton thereupon suffers an epileptic fit, grows mortally ill, but for the first time becomes lucid enough to recognize his monomania for what it has been. Before his death he admits in extended, impassioned monologues to Ford that the spiritualist's quest for tangible proof of immortality is both materialistic and amoral—a counterfeit of the religious ardor of the ages. Rather than abandon the question, however, Boynton is now within easy distance of the answer. He dies with "a desire, amounting almost to frenzy, to know whether we live again" (p. 390).

No longer dominated by her father's mania, Egeria submits to Ford's earthly "spell" and reveals to the bachelor-and-skeptic the knowable truth of earthly love. As lovers, they are forced to leave the Shaker village. They marry and live in a Boston suburb where Egeria presently becomes a convert to the Episcopalian Church, the sectarian com-

His Age as Exhibited in Magazine Articles," *American Literature*, XV (Nov. 1943), 262-78; and H. H. Clark, "The Role of Science in the Thought of W. D. Howells," *Transactions Wisconsin Academy of Science, Arts, and Letters*, XLI (Madison, 1953), 263-303.

promise.¹³ Ford, meanwhile, plays the protective husband and also dabbles happily, if somewhat mindlessly, in his scientific experiments. Their marital happiness is also an oblique criticism of the benign Shakers for their cloistered, celibate life on earth. Regarding the progress of spiritualism, Egeria and Ford have received no table-rappings from the departed Dr. Boynton. "They wait, and we must all wait" for reports from the undiscovered country (p. 419).

The Undiscovered Country, then, does possess unity when read as religious conflict posed among the three main characters. All three are exiles from a village America no longer sustained by religious orthodoxy. Cast into the alien city, they return to gain a semblance of rural and spiritual identity in the Shaker village. Howells suggests a workable resolution of the conflict in Boynton's death and the young lovers' return to Boston. Howells enclosed the religious conflict, in other words, within the frame of pastoral. But so far, the interrelationships of character and setting have revealed little more than the slim contours of pastoral. We move, next, to the interior sources of intensity in the novel, to its significance as psychological drama. This second aspect of Howells' pastoral has been missed, perhaps, because the cliché about his sexual timidity has largely gone unchallenged. He anticipated with remarkable insight, here and in other novels, the findings of modern depth psychology. What Howells understood, in particular, was the confusion of sexual emotions resulting from religious disinheritance in America. They underlie Boynton's wrongful invasion of his daughter's freedom and their mutual unease over the rival male suitor Ford. Howell's manuscript shows, in fact, that he carefully revised several important passages to make less explicit the original treatment of this father-daughter relationship—the background of abnormal repression leading to suggestions of incest. In short, rather than containing an uncoordinated love subplot, *The Undiscovered Country* became, on its psychological level, a modern search for fulfillment through human love in the disturbed and spiritually barren lives of three disinherited American villagers.

¹³ Irony is doubtless intended here. See Staniford's twitting of Dunham's religious confusion (Dunham is Episcopalian) in *The Lady of the Aroostook* (1879). Howells' play of irony is frequently the sign of irresolution in his thought. Conflicts within postwar sectarian religion—especially theological rigor versus liberalized doctrine—had been unresolved for Howells ever since the late 1860s. Belcher ("Howells's Opinions on the Religious Conflicts") overstates Howells' liberal Christianity and misses the conflict apparent from a statement like the following: "The tendency of modern liberalism to ignore the chief of the fallen angels has been one of the most painful spectacles which conservative theologians have had to contemplate. . . . Whether we call him Devil or call him Disorder, we still have the old serpent among us for all practical purposes." (Review of Cranch's *Satan: A Libretto*, *Atlantic Monthly*, XXXIII [Mar. 1874], 370-71.)

In his first seven chapters, Howells establishes in Boston the double motif of *The Undiscovered Country*, the coincidence of religious and sexual disorders within the house of Boynton, together with Ford's role as skeptical irritant and masculine intruder. At the outset, Ford and Phillips, his dilettantish friend, are waiting in the parlor of Mrs. LeRoy's house where Boynton and Egeria have been holding public séances. Presently Egeria appears, a tall, beautiful girl, ethereal except for a "rich abundance" of blonde hair. She feels an instant attraction, or repulsion, when she sees Ford: "At sight of the taller of the two, she halted . . ." (p. 4). Her father comes forward and excitedly discusses his spiritualist activities. But Egeria has become uneasy and Boynton withdraws from the room with her, presently to return with the report that "My daughter felt so deeply the dissenting, the perhaps incredulous mood—sphere—of one of you that she quite succumbed to it" (p. 15). But Boynton has exerted his will upon Egeria and has safely mesmerized her against existing danger to her emotions.

The séance which follows is a curious and disorderly meeting where spiritual ecstasy merges with the sexual. Hatch, the Boyntons' friend from Maine, charges the ladies to hold his hands but to refrain, please, from giving them a squeeze. For the "devotional" singing, he playfully suggests "Maiden's Prayer" (p. 21). When the ladies implore that a rascal ghost named Jim be made to appear, Mrs. LeRoy, the bogus-medium, quickly obliges. The appearance of Jim's hand is greeted with a female "burst of ecstasy" (p. 27) and Hatch determines that Jim would like to wear the rings of the tittering ladies present. After "many caressing demands from the ladies" to hold the hand of their "favorite spectre" (p. 27), Hatch asks Egeria for her ring. Her refusal introduces a further complication in her emotional life: "The girl gave a start, involuntarily laying hold of the ring, and Dr. Boynton said instantly, 'He cannot have it. The ring was her mother's'" (p. 28). (The decisive influence on Boynton of his wife's death will later be revealed.) In the darkened portion of the séance, another erotic poltergeist, John, the kissing ghost, appears; and Jim reappears "slapping shoulders and knees in the absolute darkness with amazing precision" (p. 31). In the midst of this "saturnalia," as one disapproving gentleman later terms the meeting, Egeria shrieks and faints to the floor. Someone (soon admitted to be Ford) had challenged Boynton's methods by seizing Egeria's hand, whereupon the sharp point of her mother's ring had pierced Egeria's finger. Nevertheless, Boynton is jubilant and does not notice that Ford has carried Egeria upstairs. In this brief action, Howells brilliantly suggests, in the mutilating ring of the dead mother, the main conflict from out of the past;

and he points to the action ahead—the lover's challenge to the abnormal father and the ultimate rescue of the daughter.

This opening chapter, the longest in the novel, deftly interweaves the religious and psychological issues of the novel. Dr. Boynton is an honest but easily duped enthusiast of spiritualism, and Howells hints in the opening séance that this obsession to commune with the spirit world carries overtones of sexual repression, not only among the customers of Mrs. LeRoy but also in Boynton. The reader is told that Boynton lost his wife shortly after Egeria's birth. Boynton thereupon began to practice mesmerism upon his daughter and has imposed his will upon her ever since. Ford represents the first serious challenge in Boston to this closeness of the father and daughter. Egeria senses Ford's influence at once, but Boynton is, as yet, not aware of the threat posed by the tall young male rival.

Nor is Boynton conscious of his motives in saving his wife's ring for his daughter to wear. But Howells supplies the necessary information for the reader, some of it strategically inserted later in the story. Boynton, after a youthful, and one assumes a repressed, experience within "the strictest sect of the Calvinists" (p. 178), had become a defiant infidel, an utter materialist, a doctor of medicine, and a dabbler in mesmerism. His heart was apparently touched by an earthly love, but his marriage ended abruptly with the death of his wife in childbirth. The event had profound consequences for Boynton:

"her death was attended by occurrences of a nature so intangible, so mysterious, so sacred, that I do not know how to shape them in words. . . . In the moment of her passing I was aware of something, as of an incorporeal presence, a disembodied life, and in that moment I believed! I accepted the heritage which she had bequeathed me with her breath, and I dedicated the child to the study of truth under the new light I had received." (p. 179)

Boynton becomes a man whose wife, rather than the church, must provide moral strength to prevent his deterioration into moral confusion. He has sought continuity with his wife's spirit through her daughter Egeria. He describes the infant Egeria as "'naturally a child of gay and sunny temperament, loving the sports of children, and fond of simple, earthly pleasures'" (p. 179), but his passion for "'spirit intercourse'" (p. 55) had led him to perform psychological experiments on his responsive young daughter.

"I argued that if spirit was truly immortal it was immutable, and that a nature like hers, warm, happy, and loving, would have the same attraction for persons in one world as in another." (p. 179)

Inadvertently, he makes the object of this "attraction" specific when he later reminds his rebellious daughter that, as a medium, she can be brought "face to face with your mother" (p. 218). Giving his wife's ring to Egeria signals the confused incest motives in Boynton's quest for his wife's departed spirit. He innocently boasts that, despite Egeria's periodic resistance to him, "in the end my influence always triumphed, for she loved me with the tender affection which her mother seemed to impart to her with the gift of her own life" (p. 180).

Howells confirmed the pattern of Boynton's daughter-wife aberration by drawing from classic myth, an early literary passion which he had refreshed in the early 1870s before his Shaker visits.¹⁴ Egeria (a Prophetic "Pythoness," as Phillips terms her) bears the name of the prophetic water nymph of Roman legend. That Howells intended more than a chance allusion to the classical Egeria is clear from certain plot parallels to the ancient myth. The Roman king Numa, like Boynton, consorted spiritually with Egeria after his own wife's death. The Egeria of legend was a free spirit, sacred to Diana; one of the Shakeresses who makes it her sacred trust to tend Egeria in her rebirth into womanhood is named "Diantha" (p. 168), pointedly revised in the manuscript from "Octavia" (ms. p. 526). The water nymph Egeria possessed, beyond the gift of prophecy, the power of healing—as does Howells' Egeria in her "motherly" attentions to her distraught father. And in a later scene, she kneels at a brook, the image of her mythical counterpart, and wets the bandage for Ford's wounded hand. Howells' adaptation of the Numa-Egeria legend, in brief, allowed him to give a shorthand treatment—necessarily a cryptic one for his Victorian audience—of the emotional sickness of the wifeless Boynton, and the essential pathos of his unnatural relation to Egeria.¹⁵

To return to the opening action of the novel. Ford comes to the Boynton's lodging several days after the séance to impugn Boynton's integrity as a spirit-hunter, and even threatens to expose him. When Boynton re-

¹⁴ See *My Literary Passions* (New York, 1895), pp. 10-11. John Fiske dedicated his *Myths and Myth-Makers* (1872) to Howells "In Remembrance of Pleasant Autumn Evenings Spent Among Werewolves and Trolls and Nixies." Howells accepted portions of the book as articles for the *Atlantic* in 1871 and 1872, and wrote the unsigned *Atlantic* review when the book appeared.

¹⁵ Poe may also have influenced Howells' handling of Boynton and Egeria. One recalls that Poe was Howells' first literary passion in fiction, and Howells wrote his first boyish stories in imitation of the *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (*My Literary Passions*, pp. 8, 18). In Poe's "Morella," the mother dies in childbirth and her spirit passes into the infant daughter. The name and classical antecedents of Poe's heroine Ligeia also point to a possible source for Howells' Egeria. Poe's treatment in "Ligeia" of spiritualism, vampirism, the hero's derangement through grief over his dead wife, and his morbid obsession to be reunited with her spirit through the body of a living woman—all suggest the interior world of Howells' Boynton.

turns to Egeria, she senses his perturbation. He is fascinated to know how she has sensed it:

"Oh, I suppose I knew it because I love you so, father. . . ." He had drawn his chair, in his excitement, close to her couch, and sat leaning intently over her. She put her arm round his neck, and gently pulled his face down on her pillow for a moment. 'Poor father! What was it vexed you?' " (p. 60)¹⁶

Buoyed by this sympathy, Boynton replies in a rage at Ford's insulting threats of exposure. When Egeria urges that they go back home rather than challenge Ford's opposition, Boynton fears the first weakening of his hold on his daughter! "'Egeria! This to your father? Do you join that scoundrel in his insult to me?'" (pp. 61-62). Egeria submits to her father's will, whereupon he presses her to analyze her strange feelings of concern about Ford. She cannot, except to admit that no other rival of Boynton's has ever effected her so. Boynton next proposes a contest over Egeria in which he and Ford shall "'enter the lists against each other in a fair struggle for supremacy'" (p. 65). He is suggesting, unawares, the traditional encounter between two romantic knights over their lady fair. He hopefully attributes Ford's influence on Egeria to "'the antagonism of opposites'" (p. 89) which will create progress in spiritualism, presumably in some Hegelian fashion; he fails to admit that the same law governs sexual interest and may threaten his paternal mastery. More accurately, Boynton may be seen to avoid looking closely at earthly passion, here and throughout the novel, for fear that he may discover his own forbidden feelings. His spiritualist ardor acts as a censor; it gives him a respectable excuse for controlling Egeria and rebuffing Ford, all in the name of spiritual progress for the race. What becomes poignant through it all is the more deeply buried motive—Boynton's desired reunion with the wife he had loved.

While Boynton is sublimely self-deceiving in matters of the heart, Egeria's behavior reveals that her father's stifling control over her emotional life has not been absolute. She is still the namesake of the nymph of classic legend, with the latent emotions of a passionate "Medea" (pp. 45, 379) or an "Ashtaroth" fertility goddess (p. 379). She senses her powers as a woman. Anticipating Ford's arrival, she plans to ask him to forgo Boynton's proposed rivalry in the public lists:

¹⁶ Deleted immediately after in the manuscript: "she pleaded with that sacred caressing motherliness which is in every woman's heart somewhere for some one" (ms. p. 242). One need not belabor the point that Egeria as a "mother" is equivalent to Egeria as wife.

all fear had left her. She hastily smoothed her hair and arranged her dress, and ran down the stairs into the parlor to encounter *her enemy* with such eagerness as a girl might show in hastening to greet *her lover*. (p. 76, italics mine)

When Ford gallantly declines the contest, Egeria writes (and rewrites) a secret note of gratitude to him. Before he can see her again, she has dutifully left Boston with her father. The Boston action closes as Phillips suggests to Ford the innocent, victimized and "deliciously abnormal" young lady they have met: "It is girlhood at odds with itself" (p. 109).

The four chapters which separate the Boston episode from the Shaker action do little to illuminate the strictly religious theme of *The Undiscovered Country*. On the psychological plane, however, they unify and advance the interior drama of the novel. Howells brilliantly conveys the derangement of the uprooted Boyntons—the father's precarious hold on reality and Egeria's dangerously repressed feminine emotions. At the railroad station, Boynton sees the air bubbles from a submerged diver in the water. In a passage which anticipates Faulkner's Quentin Compson, who would preserve his sister forever from violation by other men, Howells has Egeria's father speculate

"if it were possible to isolate a medium thus absolutely from all adverse influences, [what] great results might be expected. A speaking-tube of rubber, running from the mouth of the submerged medium—" (p. 112)

Egeria refuses the role of water nymph in this regressive fantasy with "I shouldn't have the courage to go under the water," and adds significantly, "I should be afraid of the fish" (p. 112).

The two Shakers at the depot, after speculating whether Boynton and Egeria are man and wife, are presently talking with an excited Boynton over the spiritualist origins of Shakerism, after which the Boyntons take the wrong train and are thrown penniless into a hostile countryside of suspicious rural folk. At a crossroads tavern, they are held captive under the fearful eye of a large bulldog (Egeria is believed to be a truant from a rural reform school). Egeria falls asleep during a spectacular thunderstorm which shakes the tavern and awakens her from a nightmare of being trapped at a drunken orgy from which her father could not save her. "'Come! I can't breathe here!' she pleads with Boynton (p. 157).¹⁷ From this cataclysmic moment, as Egeria is violently wrenched

¹⁷ Howells seems clearly to have understood the psychological basis of dreams, including the symbols fashioned by the repressed subconscious. In Egeria's nightmare orgy just mentioned, Howells deleted from the manuscript "and the walls were dripping with snakes" (p. 509), which recalls the phallic suggestion of Egeria's earlier fear of

out of nightmare into reality, she begins slowly to be liberated from the diseased association with her father. Nature has induced the liberating nightmare. Released from the tavern out into the cold rain, Boynton discovers sanctuary in a graveyard equipment shed, but Egeria refuses to join him: " 'No!' she shouted back to him, 'I would rather die!'" (p. 158). (On a later walk with Ford, Egeria thinks they are back at this spot: "The fever must have begun. I thought—I must have thought you—were there! I oughtn't—" [p. 329]). Her separation from her father increases as he grows wilder and more grotesque:

the rain dripped from him everywhere,—from his elbows, from the rim of his silk hat, and from the point of his nose; he looked at once weird and grotesque (p. 159).

A friendly Shaker rescues them and drives them to his settlement, where Egeria, now in a fever, will pass through a purgatory of illness to be reborn into physical health and earthly love. Boynton will experience during his mortal illness partial recognition of his submerged incest motives as a father. And Ford, also suffering emotional illness, will arrive to receive the balm of nature and love of her healing goddess Egeria.

In his account of his summer visit of 1875 at the Shaker village at Shirley, Howells weighed the values of celibacy and heavenly striving. While he hinted that the rapture of the Shaker service was a sublimation of passions held in check by the celibate discipline, he did not explicitly link fleshly ecstasy to spiritual rapture. But he did suggest in two anecdotes that perhaps earthly love was man's proper sphere and passion, to be enjoyed as a certainty in this world rather than denied for the less certain promise of heavenly bliss. First was the case of Father Abraham, a nonagenerian who had left his betrothed sixty years before to rise above his "natural propensities" at the Shirley village. Was the decision right? The Shakers thought so. Howells questioned it:

perhaps in an affair like that, a girl's heart had supreme claims. Perhaps there are some things that one ought not to do even with the hope of winning heaven. (*Atlantic*, XXXVII, 705)

Howells ended the *Atlantic* article with a dramatic contrast between the celibate Shakers and a pretty young mother who had stopped to spend

fish. In a "Contributor's Club" discussion of recurring nightmares in the *Atlantic* of June 1880, Howells related his dreams of suffocation, of menacing ghosts and of frantic mix-ups on illogically conducted trains. Add Howells' boyhood fantasies of death by hydrophobia and of snakes whose strike was lethal or who would run up the legs and encoil the ribs of their victim, and the flight by the Boyntons out of Boston into the countryside becomes a series of traumatic and subconscious experiences which Howells could sketch with the certainty of personal knowledge.

the night with her Shakeress sister. The married sister had brought her small child, and watched complacently as the self-denying Shakeresses "flocked round in worship of that deplorable heir of the Adamic order of life." The scene crystallized for Howells the contending claims between the seen and the unseen worlds, between earthly love and celibate striving for divine bliss: "Somehow the sight was pathetic. If she were right and they wrong, how much of heaven they had lost in renouncing the supreme good of earth" (p. 710).¹⁸

The primacy of the natural world and human love, which Egeria and Ford learn to enjoy directly and reverently, defines the pastoral motif in the culminating action among the Shakers. Measured against this earthly standard of human aspiration, the spiritualism of Boynton fails. So does the bleak skepticism of Ford. And the Shakers, who quietly and sincerely pursue the perfect life on earth while denying "the supreme good of earth" in their celibate Arcadia, become the objects of Howells' gentle, implicit satire. The Shakeresses, in particular, are living at cross-purposes with their natural feelings as women. First, they almost compete for the privilege of attending the sick Egeria, come to them from the Adamic order of life. One is a sister whose "tresses had been shorn away as for the grave thirty years before" (p. 168). She gazes down on the earthly beauty of the feverish visitor, and then in tribute "she stooped and kissed Egeria's hot cheek, and [blushed guiltily] then went down to the office sitting room . . ." (p. 168, bracketed deletion in ms. p. 526). Boynton obtusely wishes to believe that women are especially suited to the self-denial of Shaker celibacy. But Sister Frances admits to Egeria the pang of seeing the man she had forsaken for celibacy come with his bride for a visit to Vardley.

Boynton's particular interest in the celibate life for women is underscored by Howells' expanded rewriting of Boynton's conversation with Sister Rebecca about celibacy the first evening (pp. 166-68, ms. pp. 533 and inserts). Boynton's buried desire for his wife demands that he prevent Egeria's possession by an earthly suitor. But his plans are thwarted when she recuperates from her sickness and is reborn into the natural world. Her fever abates in late May and the Shakeresses find her awake at dawn "her large eyes wide and her lips open" listening to the singing of birds outside her window.

¹⁸ Celibacy at Shirley was partly the reason for the village's depleted numbers, a cause of concern among the elders. Ironically enough, the uncelibate Oneida settlement was currently facing a future even more uncertain. Five years later, when *The Undiscovered Country* was appearing, the Oneida's "complex marriage" had so irritated the public conscience that the communist settlement was being dissolved. This sad contrast in the struggle of American communitarianism may well have occurred to Howells, for John Humphrey Noyes, founder of Oneida, was Mrs. Howells' maternal uncle.

"It's like the singin' of spirits, ain't it?" said one of the sisters. . . .

"No!" cried the girl, almost fiercely. "It's like the singing of the birds at home." (p. 187)

Howells' description of Egeria as an awakened "Ceres" (p. 213) with a "passion" (p. 187) for the natural world ("passion" recurs four times in a dozen pages) was, in fact, even more sensuous in the original writing. He deleted his original references to her harmonious relationship with nature as a "priestess" of the "wood-deity" in nature's "mighty tabernacle," and as a "nymph" or "pretty wilding boy" (ms. pp. 593, 594). And he deleted an entire sentence of lush paganism: "Her long heavy hair had been cut away during her sickness, and the [young] [first] new growth clustered round her forehead and neck in sunny rings" (ms. pp. 593-94).

Meanwhile images of procreation beset poor Boynton at every turn, though he tries to dignify them within his program of spiritual progress. Howells deleted one portion of the visit Boynton and Egeria pay to a nearby farm (pp. 197-98). In the deleted segment (ms. pp. 613-16) Egeria had remained safely inside the house while the farmer showed his prize black bull to Boynton. The scene became virtually light comedy as Boynton steered the conversation away from animalistic matters to a lofty consideration of "progress" through good breeding in the world.¹⁹ On one walk with her father, Egeria gathers laurel boughs "now coming richly into bloom" and is unaware that Boynton has directed her into the Shakers' graveyard. While his thoughts are on death and the next world, hers are defiantly on life "here in this world,—on the earth" (p. 201). When he sounds out her feelings about conversion to Shakerism, Egeria praises Shaker goodness, but her specific objection to their unworldly life was deleted from Howells' manuscript: "'Why don't they get married and live together naturally? I think that is the best way'" (ms. p. 626). Several pages afterward, when Egeria thinks of her father's concern over her, she links it to Ford and asks Sister Frances, "'Did any letter come for me while I was sick? . . . No, there couldn't have been any answer'" (p. 209). She then blushes and lapses into deep reverie. Boynton senses her imminent rebellion, as well as the Shakers' disapproval of him, and proposes that they leave, perhaps removing themselves to Europe. "'I don't like my environment here,'" he tells Egeria. "'I am conscious of adverse influences'" (p. 213). Egeria pledges her

¹⁹ This deleted scene is anticipated in the earlier "A Shaker Village." Howells noticed "a vigorous sketch in oil of a Durham bull" in the Shaker barn, drawn by a boy who "never became a Shaker" (p. 708). Eighteen years later this boy turns up, oddly enough, in *A World of Chance*. The altruistic inventor Ansel Denton was a Shaker youth who drew a picture of a bull, was rebuked by the elders and decided to leave the community.

loyalty to him, and Boynton goes ahead with defiant proof of his powers of spiritualism at the next Shaker meeting. But the demonstration becomes a debacle, for Egeria no longer possesses the delicate responses to her father's will.

Unknown to Boynton and Egeria, Ford has accidentally arrived at the Vardley community the same evening, and with his arrival, the novel moves toward gradual resolution of the religious and sexual conflict. Boynton has wandered stormily about all the night and, in the morning, coming upon Ford, Boynton attributes Egeria's failure to Ford's neighboring presence. But in clutching at Ford's throat, Boynton suffers an epileptic seizure, reels and strikes his head. This dramatic encounter turns out to be the moment of Boynton's return to sanity. He regains consciousness and, lying on his deathbed, realizes that his spiritualism has been aimed at reunion with his dead wife. After his own agnosticism, Boynton tells Ford, "in circumstances of great sorrow, I embraced the philosophy of spiritualism, because it promised immediate communion and reunion with the wife I had lost" (p. 281).

Howells' complex portrait of Boynton is nowhere so subtle as here. Boynton gropes toward self-recognition without knowing that he is solving a painful cryptogram within his own mind. Having admitted his spiritualist absorption in his dead wife, the next revelation for Boynton has to be the horror of his involvement with his daughter. But Boynton's feelings have been buried for years. His mind has learned to practice many disguises. Boynton does admit his sin as a father, but the admission is devious and cryptic. Since it entails his rivalry with Ford, Boynton senses that Ford is the logical audience at his bedside and the agent who can lift the curse from the Boynton household. But it would be too damning for Boynton openly to recognize Ford as a sexual adversary. "You have somehow been strangely involved in our destiny," he says to Ford (p. 286); and again, "I find a great similarity of mind and temperament in us" (p. 288). How can Boynton in some way admit his guilt and release Egeria to her rightful suitor? His sudden inspiration is to be reconciled to Egeria's maternal grandfather in Maine, who had objected to Boynton's isolating Egeria after her mother's death. Boynton's gesture here reflects some sense that his paternal behavior has been wrong and the father-in-law has been right. Moreover, Boynton's words "my adversary is the father of my child's mother" (p. 282) seem to be a coded way of admitting that father and son-in-law have a way of contending against each other within a family. Boynton's seeking the blessing of his father-in-law seems also to express a desire to resolve the more immediate triangle which includes his younger adversary Ford. This possibility is supported by his asking Ford to send the message to

Maine, a gesture of trust but perhaps also a subconscious way of saying, "Act for me: i.e., replace me." It may be taken to mean that Ford is thereby invited to replace Boynton also in the closer triangle—to become the sole and proper contender for the affections of Egeria.²⁰ That the grandfather had recently died is not important here. Boynton has made his gesture to Ford, and it enables him to move even closer to a conscious recognition of the incest taboo he has violated. He confesses his paternal vampirism to Ford:

"I seized upon a simple, loving nature, good and sweet in its earthliness, and sacred in it, and alienated it from all its possible happiness to the uses of my ambition. I have played the vampire!" (pp. 318-19)

Boynton finally can face death without dread, his cryptic confession made, his earthly anxieties somewhat lifted by partial self-recognition and his spiritualism reassessed. Indeed, he must die, for his fulfillment can logically occur only beyond the grave. He can discover reunion with his beloved wife now without violation of Egeria, and he passes to the grave with his accustomed enthusiasm.

Egeria gains final release into life and earthly love during Ford's Shaker residence. Her bruised emotions gradually heal as Ford and she make excursions into the countryside. Typical of Howells' mastery in depicting Egeria's unresolved feelings toward her father and Ford is the late scene in which the two have been collecting autumn leaves for Boynton's bed-table. Ford happens to apologize for the earlier injury he caused to Egeria's hand in the opening séance: "He looked at the hand on which she wore her ring, and she hid the hand in the folds of her dress, and turned her head away" (pp. 296-97). She suddenly realizes that they have forgotten the leaves they had picked for her father. Egeria cries, "No, no, I can get them. You musn't come. I don't wish you to come'" (p. 297). Slowly she becomes able to give herself without conflict or fear to the man whose presence had disturbed her before. In the culminating love scene, they discover what Ford's earthly "influence" over Egeria has been:

"Do you think it is a spell, now?"
"I don't know."
"And are you afraid of it?"
"No"—

²⁰ A Howells seminar-paper by Herbert Kelly of San Diego State College suggests in further detail Boynton's obscure recognition of his sexual conflict as it involves these antagonisms toward both his father-in-law and Ford.

"What is it, Egeria?" he cried, and in the beseeching look which she lifted to his, their eyes tenderly met. "Oh, my darling? Was *this* the spell"—

The rapture choked him; he caught her hand and drew her towards him. (p. 411)

An inspired comic touch by Howells is the presence also of Sister Frances, who has been furtively watching this successful and un-Shakerly end to her labors as Egeria's nurse. "But at this bold action, Sister Frances, who had not ceased to watch them, threw her apron over her head" (p. 411).

Finally, Ford himself has been rescued out of the bleak world of rationalism into the warmth of earthly passion. With a cynical bachelor's reluctance to admit that his restlessness might have been partly induced by a woman, he had spent a Sunday at a spiritualist meeting at Walden, only to return to Boston with a headache, followed by dizziness and the advice of his doctor to "get a change of air" (p. 256). His chance encounter with the Boyntons again enables him to discover that Egeria is the medium who will reveal for him the reality which all religions pursue. He says to a Shaker elder: "'You talk of your angelic life! Can you dream of anything nearer the bliss of heaven than union with such tenderness and mercy as hers?'" (p. 352). At the end, he marries neither a spiritual Beatrice nor a passionate Medea. His wife is supremely normal, and Ford "feels it a sacred charge to keep Egeria's life in the full sunshine of our common day" (p. 419).

The Undiscovered Country, then, may be properly described as a drama of passion and forbidden impulses within an American family unloosed from older religious and emotional moorings, searching for an anchorage in the present. Howells discovered the dramatic equivalents for this conflict in the Boynton-Egeria-Ford triangle established in Boston and culminating in the rural environment of Shakerism. This pattern of action and setting is enlarged by an accumulation of details in the novel which treat oppositions between city and country, present and past, complexity and simplicity, intellect and feeling. The novel contains references to Emerson and Hawthorne, and to Thoreau's *Walden*; the Boyntons are emigrants to Boston from a disappearing Maine village; Ford is an urbanized country boy writing articles for a Boston paper on changes in rural New England life; Mrs. LeRoy has come to Boston from the West, as have summer tourists who annually invade New England. Indeed, the novel opens against the background of radical change in postwar America:

Some years ago, at a time when the rapid growth of the city was changing the character of many localities, two young men were sitting, one afternoon in April, in the parlor of a house on one of those streets

which, without having yet accomplished their destiny as business thoroughfares, were no longer the homes of the decorous ease that once inhabited them. (p. 1)

Not only the religious and psychological conflicts previously described, but also countless details which seem merely incidental, become significant when one views the novel in its final, achieved form—as Howells' version of American pastoral.²¹

During his 1875 summer visit among the Shakers, as I have remarked, Howells was discovering the complex variety of materials which later would give density and significance to *The Undiscovered Country*. The list grew to include other problems of New England and national life: the disappearance of the family-sized farm, rural despair, the lure of the West, urban migration, the growth of industrialism and unemployment, communist alternatives to free enterprise. All of these and other changes in our national life led Howells to brood over the course American civilization was taking. The Shakers' own "decay of numbers" was "but their share of the common blight, and how to arrest it their share of the common perplexity" ("A Shaker Village," p. 706). These tensions, soon to demand expression in Howells' fiction, were increased by his own awareness at this time that the Ohio village was not a satisfying alternative to life in commercial Boston. By 1875, he was no longer the youth who had written Ohio pastorals in imitation of Pope. He was now willing to admit that "our ordinary country life" in America is "hard and often sordid commonplace" (p. 699). *The Undiscovered Country* was to become, however, not antipastoral but a sobering version of American pastoral; and reconciliation of the tensions between America's present and past would be an important part of Howells' pastoral vision in 1880.

The additional levels of pastoral in *The Undiscovered Country* are established also within the lives of Boynton, Egeria and Ford. Boynton was Howells' distillation of New England's historical search for spiritual reality. He moved out of a brooding Calvinism through a stolid scientific rationalism. He opened an intercourse with the world through his marriage to an earthly woman, and upon her death, he tried to discover the world of spirit by etherealizing his daughter's free and natural instincts. Unfortunately, Boynton is a grotesque from out of the past who is cut off from the present; his thoughts are on decay, autumn and death. Though he considers Emerson "a very receptive mind" (p. 141), he is more the villain of Hawthorne (pp. 109-10) whose desperate quest for truth has

²¹ For this final aspect of Howells' pastoral, I owe general debts to Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York, 1964). Another recent work from which I have profited is Glen A. Love's "Sherwood Anderson's American Pastoral" (doctor's thesis, University of Washington, 1964).

violated nature and the sanctity of the human heart. He has separated himself from the passional lives of men and women. He is properly described by Ford's friend Phillips to be "'as curious an outcome of this bubble-and-squeak that we call our civilization as anything I know of'" (p. 108).

Ford is Boynton's next-generation antagonist, similar to Boynton in his loss of traditional belief and also in being a refugee from a village America no longer self-sustaining. But Ford lacks Boynton's neurotic enthusiasm to extract from the natural world the spiritual secrets which Emerson had discovered there. Both Ford and Boynton, finally, are attracted to Egeria, in whom the properties of nature and "spirit" appear to dwell in precarious imbalance.

In the opening action in Boston, Howells rapidly unfolds the several layers of his pastoral theme. Ford's barren spiritual existence in the city is apparent in his curiosity and need to attend Boynton's séance. The melancholy old house, a "material token of a social decay" (p. 2), belongs to the devious Mrs. LeRoy. Her recent arrival from the West makes sufficient comment on the spiritual resources of the American *Garden*. In the tawdry parlor of this old Boston residence, Boynton tries to conjure up the departed spirits of the past. He attributes his and Egeria's failure to the hostile materialism of the present—Ford's religious doubt and the "mercenary" impulses of the age. His decision is to leave Boston and try to rediscover in the New England village a setting congenial to his pursuit of voices from out of the past.

The remaining twenty-one chapters of the novel develop the theme of rural New England as a pastoral restorative for the malaise of postwar America. The Boyntons' first glimpse of the Massachusetts countryside is less than encouraging. They are met with suspicion and hostility. They are taken to be either displaced tramps or escapees from the law. They wander in the shadows of Massachusetts forests "where the farmer has ceased to coax his wizened crops from the sterile soil and has abandoned it in despair to the wilderness from which his ancestors conquered it" (p. 134). A schoolteacher who befriends them for the night teaches only sixteen pupils in a school that once held fifty. They see not country maidens, but instead, at the crossroads tavern, a painted woman. Elsewhere they come upon wandering "free" Negroes, unpainted dwellings of poor whites and the ruined masonry of former homes rising amid the "brutal grotesquery" of a lost Arcadia cynically dubbed "Skunk's Misery" (p. 197).

Through Ford's eyes, Howells amplifies this theme of pastoral blight. On the country journey which will take him, unawares, back into the company of the Boyntons, Ford observes

the sparse farmhouses and the lonesome villages [which] afflicted him with the remembrance of his own youth; whatever his life had been since, it had not been embittered with the sense of hopeless endeavor, with the galled pride, with the angry ambition, which had once made it a torment in such places. (p. 262)

More significant is the experience, already mentioned, which impelled Ford to seek the New England hills—a disheartening excursion to Thoreau's Walden Pond on a Sunday. Howells inserted the incident in revising his original manuscript (five pages of inserts at ms. p. 748) and the relevance is obvious. The country-folk on a Sunday picnic recall to Ford his own boyhood,

but here was a profaner flavor: scraps of newspaper that had wrapped lunches blew about the grounds; at one place a man had swung a hammock, and lay in it reading, in his shirt-sleeves; on the pond was a fleet of gay rowboats, which, however, the railroad company would not allow to be hired on Sunday. . . . [One] of the people in charge complained of the dullness of the place. "What you want is a band. You want a dance-hall in the middle of the pond, here; and you want a band." (pp. 254-55)

This profanation of Walden Pond (nicely anticipating the modern Thames of T. S. Eliot), together with the vulgar spectacle of a nearby post-transcendental spiritualist meeting, sends Ford back to Boston with a headache and several days of dizziness and indigestion. Like Egeria, Ford has experienced not restoration and health, but instead, a more severe illness in his initial return to a blighted New England Arcadia. But their mutual sojourn in the Shaker village will be another story.

A sickness of spirit infects all three characters upon their arrival at the Shakers' idyllic communist village, and the novel traces from that point the effects of this quasi-pastoral setting on each character. Boynton receives the least benefit, but his fate is nevertheless instructive. Living with his Idea, he never rallies into a love for the natural world or communication with its eternal movements. He responds only to its violent moods and its nighttime and autumnal periods. His death is prefigured, and when it comes, Howells supplies the physician's report. It contains an obvious comment on Boynton's diseased affections: "'The heart had been affected a long time'" (p. 391).

Prospects for the newer generation in America are more hopeful. Egeria experiences a renewed tie with the rhythms of nature during her convalescence, and a rebirth of her feminine emotions. She becomes divorced from her father's desperate vampirism. She learns to appreciate the simplicity of the Shakers' communal life. At the same time, she senses that

Shaker denial of earthly passion is incongruous with their other good and natural instincts. She accepts, as the Shakers do not, familiar love, marriage and earthly fulfillment. Ford also is redeemed out of his sterile unbelief as the Shakers' Arcadian surroundings help awaken him to the natural imperatives of human love. Returned to a world of feeling, he loses his cynical edges and, with Egeria as his wife, no longer feels alien to life in the city.

The Undiscovered Country ends, without yearning or regret, as a modern version of pastoral, an updated *Blithedale Romance*.²² The death of her grandfather has severed Egeria's last family ties to the village home in Maine. But Egeria and Ford discover a reconciliation between city and country. They live in suburban Boston. Ford conducts his scientific experiments in a laboratory adjacent to their garden. Thoroughly urbanized, newly wealthy and glad of it (Ford's science has brought forth a profitable convenience for the modern housewife), they have also learned, while living in the present, to entertain the Arcadian moment out of the past. They retreat from their busy round of parties, dinners and theater engagements during one month of each summer, and receive, instead, the balm of nature as they live a simple, unhurried and tourist-free existence in the undiscovered country of the Shaker farmers in rural Massachusetts.

The Undiscovered Country was Howells' first broad treatment of American life, a regional story which enlarged, through its pastoral motifs, into a national study of religious, psychological and social dislocation in the late nineteenth century. *The Undiscovered Country* reveals for the first time Howells' major gifts as a novelist. The present essay has tried to suggest the art and intent of this rich and interesting work. The long gestation period, together with the extensive revisions, show that Howells could be as demanding an artist as Henry James in developing his *donnée* and conceiving its dramatic equivalents. Howells' subtlety in handling sexual repression and awakening also rivals James at his best. And it should long ago have put to sleep the charge that, because his love scenes were tame, Howells avoided the problems arising from man's mammalian instincts. One can only assume that Howells, who also

²² Howells' debts to Hawthorne seem considerable, if one recalls "The Canterbury Pilgrims," "Rappaccini's Daughter" and especially *The Blithedale Romance*, Howells' favorite. Egeria is a spiritual Priscilla who blooms into a warm Zenobia and becomes a whole woman. Ford is a Coverdale with the added good fortune of overcoming skepticism and choosing his ideal lady in time. Boynton is a grotesque Westervelt with some of the visionary zeal of Hollingsworth. A full-scale comparison of the two novels can profitably follow the thematic outlines set forth in Robert Stanton's essay, "The Trial of Nature: An Analysis of *The Blithedale Romance*," *PMLA*, LXXVI (Dec. 1961), 528-38.

created the sexually confused Don Ippolito (*A Foregone Conclusion*), Staniford (*The Lady of the Aroostook*), Owen Elmore (*A Fearful Responsibility*), Marcia Gaylord (*A Modern Instance*), the Lapham sisters (*The Rise of Silas Lapham*), Colville (*Indian Summer*), Faulkner (*The Shadow of a Dream*) and Westover (*The Landlord at Lion's Head*) must have decided to keep his private joke when he permitted his critics to complain about the timid evasions in his treatment of man and woman. Not only did he treat sexual neurosis again and again in his novels, but he understood its direct relation to the external disorders of a changing civilization.

Finally, it may happen that *The Undiscovered Country* is the pioneering version of American pastoral in the post-Civil War novel. Certainly it anticipates the themes of Mark Twain, Frank Norris, Sherwood Anderson, Faulkner, Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Salinger and other novelists who have posed the dialectical tensions of pastoral in modern America. Both for its fictional art and as Howells' first major attempt to reconcile the American present with the past, *The Undiscovered Country* deserves continued study and interpretation.

H h



Hot spice ginger
bread, all hot.

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Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865

CONFRONTED BY THE BEWILDERING VARIETY OF PROJECTS FOR REGENERATING American society, Emerson concluded his survey of humanitarian reform in 1844 with the observation that "the Church, or religious party, is falling away from the Church nominal, and . . . appearing in temperance and nonresistance societies; in movements of abolitionists and of socialists . . . of seekers, of all the soul of the soldiery of dissent." Common to all these planners and prophets, he noted, was the conviction of an "infinite worthiness" in man and the belief that reform simply meant removing "impediments" to natural perfection.¹

Emerson was defining, both as participant and observer, a romantic revolution which T. E. Hulme once described as "spilt religion."² A romantic faith in perfectibility, originally confined by religious institutions, overflows these barriers and spreads across the surface of society, seeping into politics and culture. Perfectibility—the essentially religious notion of the individual as a "reservoir" of possibilities—fosters a revolutionary assurance "that if you can so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance and you will get Progress." Hulme had in mind the destructive forces of the French Revolution, but his phrase is also a particularly accurate description of the surge of social reform which swept across Emerson's America in the three decades before the Civil War. Out of a seemingly conservative religious revival there flowed a spate of perfectionist ideas for the improve-

¹ Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The New England Reformers," *Works* (Centenary ed.), III, 251; "Man the Reformer," *Works*, I, 248-49.

² T. E. Hulme, "Romanticism and Classicism," *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London, 1924), reprinted in *Critiques and Essays in Criticism, 1920-1948*, ed. Robert Wooster Stallman (New York, 1949), pp. 8-16.

ment and rearrangement of American society. Rising rapidly in the years after 1830, the flood of social reform reached its crest at midcentury only to be checked by political crisis and the counterforces of the Civil War. Reform after the Civil War, though still concerned with individual perfectibility, proceeded from new and different assumptions as to the nature of individualism and its preservation in an urban industrial society. Romantic reform ended with the Civil War and an intellectual counterrevolution which discredited the concept of the irreducible self and eventually redirected reform energies.

Romantic reform in America traced its origins to a religious impulse which was both politically and socially conservative. With the consolidation of independence and the arrival of democratic politics the new nineteenth-century generation of American churchmen faced a seeming crisis. Egalitarianism and rising demands for church disestablishment suddenly appeared to threaten an inherited Christian order and along with it the preferred status of the clergy. Lyman Beecher spoke the fears of more than one of the clerical party when he warned that Americans were fast becoming "another people." When the attempted alliance between sound religion and correct politics failed to prevent disestablishment or improve waning Federalist fortunes at the polls, the evangelicals, assuming a defensive posture, organized voluntary benevolent associations to strengthen the Christian character of Americans and save the country from infidelity and ruin. Between 1815 and 1830 nearly a dozen moral reform societies were established to counter the threats to social equilibrium posed by irreligious democrats. Their intense religious concern could be read in the titles of the benevolent societies which the evangelicals founded: the American Bible Society, the American Sunday School Union, the American Home Missionary Society, the American Tract Society. By the time of the election of Andrew Jackson the benevolent associations formed a vast if loosely coordinated network of conservative reform enterprises staffed with clergy and wealthy laymen who served as self-appointed guardians of American morals.³

The clerical diagnosticians had little difficulty in identifying the symptoms of democratic disease. Infidelity flourished on the frontier and licentiousness bred openly in seaboard cities; intemperance sapped the strength of American workingmen and the saving word was denied their children. Soon atheism would destroy the vital organs of the republic unless drastic moral therapy prevented. The evangelicals' prescription followed logically from their diagnosis: large doses of morality injected

³ For discussions of evangelical reform see John R. Bodo, *The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues, 1812-1848* (Princeton, 1954) and Clifford S. Griffin, *Their Brothers' Keepers* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1960).

into the body politic under the supervision of Christian stewards. No more Sunday mails or pleasure excursions, no more grog-shops or profane pleasures, no family without a Bible and no community without a minister of the gospel. Accepting for the moment their political liabilities, the moral reformers relied on the homeopathic strategy of fighting democratic excess with democratic remedies. The Tract Society set up three separate printing presses which cranked out hundreds of thousands of pamphlets for mass distribution. The Home Missionary Society subsidized seminarians in carrying religion into the backcountry. The Temperance Union staged popular conventions; the Peace Society sponsored public debates; the Bible Society hired hundreds of agents to spread its propaganda.

The initial thrust of religious reform, then, was moral rather than social, preventive rather than curative. Nominally rejecting politics and parties, the evangelicals looked to a general reformation of the American character achieved through a revival of piety and morals in the individual. By probing his conscience, by convincing him of his sinful ways and converting him to right conduct they hoped to engineer a Christian revolution which would leave the foundations of the social order undisturbed. The realization of their dream of a nonpolitical "Christian party" in America would ensure a one-party system open to moral talent and the natural superiority of Christian leadership. Until their work was completed, the evangelicals stood ready as servants of the Lord to manage their huge reformatory apparatus in behalf of order and sobriety.

But the moral reformers inherited a theological revolution which in undermining their conservative defenses completely reversed their expectations for a Christian America. The transformation of American theology in the first quarter of the nineteenth century released the very forces of romantic perfectionism that conservatives most feared. This religious revolution advanced along three major fronts: first, the concentrated anti-theocratic assault of Robert Owen and his secular utopian followers, attacks purportedly atheistic and environmentalist but in reality Christian in spirit and perfectionist in method; second, the revolt of liberal theology beginning with Unitarianism and culminating in transcendentalism; third, the containment operation of the "new divinity" in adapting orthodoxy to the criticism of liberal dissent. The central fact in the romantic reorientation of American theology was the rejection of determinism. Salvation, however variously defined, lay open to everyone. Sin was voluntary: men were not helpless and depraved by nature but free agents and potential powers for good. Sin could be reduced to the selfish preferences of individuals, and social evils, in turn, to collective sins which, once acknowledged, could be rooted out. Perfectionism spread

rapidly across the whole spectrum of American Protestantism as different denominations and sects elaborated their own versions of salvation. If man was a truly free agent, then his improvement became a matter of immediate consequence. The progress of the country suddenly seemed to depend upon the regeneration of the individual and the contagion of example.

As it spread, perfectionism swept across denominational barriers and penetrated even secular thought. Perfection was presented as Christian striving for holiness in the "new heart" sermons of Charles Grandison Finney and as an immediately attainable goal in the come-outer prophecies of John Humphrey Noyes. It was described as an escape from outworn dogma by Robert Owen and as the final union of the soul with nature by Emerson. The important fact for most Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century was that it was readily available. A romantic religious faith had changed an Enlightenment doctrine of progress into a dynamic principle of reform.

For the Founding Fathers' belief in perfectibility had been wholly compatible with a pessimistic appraisal of the present state of mankind. Progress, in the view of John Adams or James Madison, resulted from the planned operation of mechanical checks within the framework of government which balanced conflicting selfish interests and neutralized private passions. Thus a properly constructed governmental machine might achieve by artifact what men, left to their own devices, could not—gradual improvement of social institutions and a measure of progress. Perfectionism, on the contrary, as an optative mood demanded total commitment and immediate action. A latent revolutionary force lay in its demand for immediate reform and its promise to release the new American from the restraints of institutions and precedent. In appealing to the liberated individual, perfectionism reinforced the Jacksonian attack on institutions, whether a "Monster Bank" or a secret Masonic order, entrenched monopolies or the Catholic Church. But in emphasizing the unfettered will as the proper vehicle for reform it provided a millenarian alternative to Jacksonian politics. Since social evils were simply individual acts of selfishness compounded, and since Americans could attempt the perfect society any time they were so inclined, it followed that the duty of the true reformer consisted in educating them and making them models of good behavior. As the sum of individual sins social wrong would disappear when enough people had been converted and rededicated to right conduct. Deep and lasting reform, therefore, meant an educational crusade based on the assumption that when a sufficient number of individual Americans had seen the light, they would automatically solve the country's social problems. Thus formulated, perfectionist reform offered

a program of mass conversion achieved through educational rather than political means. In the opinion of the romantic reformers the regeneration of American society began, not in legislative enactments or political manipulation, but in a calculated appeal to the American urge for individual self-improvement.

Perfectionism radically altered the moral reform movement by shattering the benevolent societies themselves. Typical of these organizations was the American Peace Society founded in 1828 as a forum for clerical discussions of the gospel of peace. Its founders, hoping to turn American attention from the pursuit of wealth to the prevention of war, debated the question of defensive war, constructed hypothetical leagues of amity, and in a general way sought to direct American foreign policy into pacific channels. Perfectionism, however, soon split the Peace Society into warring factions as radical nonresistants, led by the Christian prefectionist Henry C. Wright, denounced all use of force and demanded the instant creation of an American society modeled on the precepts of Jesus. Not only war but all governmental coercion fell under the ban of the nonresistants who refused military service and political office along with the right to vote. After a series of skirmishes the nonresistants seceded in 1838 to form their own New England Non-Resistant Society; and by 1840 the institutional strength of the peace movement had been completely broken.

The same power of perfectionism disrupted the temperance movement. The founders of the temperance crusade had considered their reform an integral part of the program of moral stewardship and had directed their campaign against "ardent spirits" which could be banished "by a correct and efficient public sentiment." Until 1833 there was no general agreement on a pledge of total abstinence: some local societies required it, others did not. At the first national convention held in that year, however, the radical advocates of temperance, following their perfectionist proclivities, demanded a pledge of total abstinence and hurried on to denounce the liquor traffic as "morally wrong." Soon both the national society and local and state auxiliaries were split between moderates content to preach to the consumer and radicals bent on extending moral suasion to public pressure on the seller. After 1836 the national movement disintegrated into scattered local societies which attempted with no uniform program and no permanent success to establish a cold-water America.

By far the most profound change wrought by perfectionism was the sudden emergence of abolition. The American Colonization Society, founded in 1817 as another key agency in the moral reform complex, aimed at strengthening republican institutions by deporting an inferior and therefore undesirable Negro population. The cooperation of South-

erners hoping to strengthen the institution of slavery gave Northern colonizationists pause, but they succeeded in repressing their doubts until a perfectionist ethic totally discredited their program. The abolitionist pioneers were former colonizationists who took sin and redemption seriously and insisted that slavery constituted a flat denial of perfectibility to both Negroes and whites. They found in immediate emancipation a perfectionist formula for casting off the guilt of slavery and bringing the Negro to Christian freedom. Destroying slavery, the abolitionists argued, depended first of all on recognizing it as sin; and to this recognition they bent their efforts. Their method was direct and intensely personal. Slaveholding they considered a deliberate flouting of the divine will for which there was no remedy but repentance. Since slavery was sustained by a system of interlocking personal sins, their task was to teach Americans to stop sinning. "We shall send forth agents to lift up the voice of remonstrance, of warning, of entreaty, and of rebuke," the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society announced. Agents, tracts, petitions and conventions—all the techniques of the moral reformers—were brought to bear on the consciences of Americans to convince them of their sin.

From the beginning, then, the abolitionists mounted a moral crusade rather than an engine of limited reform. For seven years, from 1833 to 1840, their society functioned as a loosely coordinated enterprise—a national directory of antislavery opinion. Perfectionist individualism made effective organization difficult and often impossible. Antislavery delegates from state and local societies gathered at annual conventions to frame denunciatory resolutions, listen to endless rounds of speeches and go through the motions of electing officers. Nominal leadership but very little power was vested in a self-perpetuating executive committee. Until its disruption in 1840 the national society was riddled with controversy as moderates, disillusioned by the failure of moral suasion, gradually turned to politics, and ultras, equally disenchanted by public hostility, abandoned American institutions altogether. Faced with the resistance of Northern churches and state legislatures, the perfectionists, led by William Lloyd Garrison, deserted politics for the principle of secession. The come-outer abolitionists, who eventually took for their motto "No Union with Slaveholders," sought an alternative to politics in the command to cast off church and state for a holy fraternity which would convert the nation by the power of example. The American Anti-Slavery Society quickly succumbed to the strain of conflicting philosophies and warring personalities. In 1840 the Garrisonians seized control of the society and drove their moderate opponents out. Thereafter neither ultras nor moderates were able to maintain an effective national organization.

Thus romantic perfectionism altered the course of the reform enterprise by appealing directly to the individual conscience. Its power stemmed from a millennial expectation which proved too powerful a moral explosive for the reform agencies. In one way or another almost all of the benevolent societies felt the force of perfectionism. Moderates, attempting political solutions, scored temporary gains only to receive sharp setbacks. Local option laws passed one year were repealed the next. Despite repeated attempts the Sunday School Union failed to secure permanent adoption of its texts in the public schools. The Liberty Party succeeded only in electing a Democratic president in 1844. Generally, direct political action failed to furnish reformers with the moral leverage they believed necessary to perfect American society. The conviction spread accordingly that politicians and legislators, as Albert Brisbane put it, were engaged in "superficial controversies and quarrels, which lead to no practical results."⁴ Political results, a growing number of social reformers were convinced, would be forthcoming only when the reformation of society at large had been accomplished through education and example.

The immediate effects of perfectionism, therefore, were felt outside politics in humanitarian reforms. With its confidence in the liberated individual perfectionism tended to be anti-institutional and exclusivist; but at the same time it posited an ideal society in which this same individual could discover his power for good and exploit it. Such a society would tolerate neither poverty nor suffering; it would contain no condemned classes or deprived citizens, no criminals or forgotten men. Impressed with the necessity for saving these neglected elements of American society, the humanitarian reformers in the years after 1830 undertook a huge rescue operation.

Almost to a man the humanitarians came from moral reform backgrounds. Samuel Gridley Howe was a product of Old Colony religious zeal and a Baptist education at Brown; Thomas Gallaudet a graduate of Andover and an ordained minister; Dorothea Dix a daughter of an itinerant Methodist minister, school mistress and Sunday school teacher-turned-reformer; E. M. P. Wells, founder of the reform school, a pastor of a Congregational church in Boston. Louis Dwight, the prison reformer, had been trained for the ministry at Yale and began his reform career as a traveling agent for the American Tract Society. Robert Hartley, for thirty years the secretary of the New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, started as a tract distributor and temperance lecturer. Charles Loring Brace served as a missionary on Blackwell's Island before founding the Children's Aid Society.

⁴ Arthur Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man: or, Association and Reorganization of Industry* (Philadelphia, 1840), introduction, p. vi.

In each of these cases of conversion to humanitarian reform there was a dramatic disclosure of deprivation and suffering which did not tally with preconceived notions of perfectibility—Dorothea Dix's discovery of the conditions in the Charlestown reformatory, Robert Hartley's inspection of contaminated milk in New York slums, Samuel Gridley Howe's chance conversation with Dr. Fisher in Boston. Something very much like a conversion experience seems to have forged the decisions of the humanitarians to take up their causes, a kind of revelation which furnished them with a ready-made role outside politics and opened a new career with which they could become completely identified. With the sudden transference of a vague perfectionist faith in self-improvement to urgent social problems there emerged a new type of professional reformer whose whole life became identified with the reform process.

Such, for example, was the conversion of Dorothea Dix from a lonely and afflicted schoolteacher who composed meditative studies of the life of Jesus into "D. L. Dix," the militant advocate of the helpless and forgotten. In a very real sense Miss Dix's crusade for better treatment of the insane and the criminal was one long self-imposed subjection to suffering. Her reports, which recorded cases of unbelievable mistreatment, completed a kind of purgative rite in which she assumed the burden of innocent suffering and passed it on as guilt to the American people. The source of her extraordinary energy lay in just this repeated submission of herself to human misery until she felt qualified to speak out against it. Both an exhausting schedule and the almost daily renewal of scenes of suffering seemed to give her new energies for playing her romantic reform role in an effective and intensely personal way. Intense but not flexible: there was little room for exchange and growth in the mood of atonement with which she approached her work. Nor was her peculiarly personal identification with the victims of American indifference easily matched in reform circles. Where other reformers like the abolitionists often made abstract pleas for "bleeding humanity" and "suffering millions," hers was the real thing—a perfectionist fervor which strengthened her will at the cost of psychological isolation. Throughout her career she preferred to work alone, deplored the tendency to multiply reform agencies and ignoring those that existed either because she disagreed with their principles, as in the case of Louis Dwight's Boston Prison Discipline Society, or because she chose the more direct method of personal appeal. In all her work, even the unhappy and frustrating last years as superintendent of nurses in the Union Army, she saw herself as a solitary spokesman for the deprived and personal healer of the suffering.

Another reform role supplied by perfectionism was Bronson Alcott's educator-prophet, the "true reformer" who "studied man as he is from

the hand of the Creator, and not as he is made by the errors of the world." Convinced that the self sprang from divine origins in nature, Alcott naturally concluded that children were more susceptible to good than people imagined and set out to develop a method for uncovering that goodness. With the power to shape personality the teacher, Alcott was sure, held the key to illimitable progress and the eventual regeneration of the world. The teacher might literally make society over by teaching men as children to discover their own divine natures. Thus true education for Alcott consisted of the process of self-discovery guided by the educator-prophet. He sharply criticized his contemporaries for their fatal mistake of imposing partial and therefore false standards on their charges. Shades of the prison house obscured the child's search for perfection, and character was lost forever. "Instead of following it in the path pointed out by its Maker, instead of learning by observation, and guiding it in that path; we unthinkingly attempt to shape its course to our particular wishes. . . ."⁵

To help children avoid the traps set by their elders Alcott based his whole system on the cultivation of self-awareness through self-examination. His pupils kept journals in which they scrutinized their behavior and analyzed their motives. Ethical problems were the subject of frequent and earnest debate at the Temple School as the children were urged to discover the hidden springs of perfectibility in themselves. No mechanical methods of rote learning could bring on the moment of revelation; each child was unique and would find himself in his own way. The real meaning of education as reform, Alcott realized, came with an increased social sense that resulted from individual self-discovery. As the creator of social personality Alcott's teacher was bound by no external rules of pedagogy: as the primary social reformer he had to cast off "the shackles of form, of mode, and ceremony" in order to play the required roles in the educational process.

Alcott's modernity lay principally in his concept of the interchangeability of roles—both teacher and pupils acquired self-knowledge in an exciting give-and-take. Thus defined, education became a way of life, a continuing process through which individuals learned to obey the laws of their own natures and in so doing to discover the laws of the good society. This identification of individual development with true social unity was crucial for Alcott, as for the other perfectionist communitarians, because it provided the bridge over which they passed from self to society. The keystone in Alcott's construction was supplied by the individual

⁵ For a careful analysis of Alcott's educational theories see Dorothy McCuskey, *Bronson Alcott, Teacher* (New York, 1940), particularly pp. 25-40 from which these quotations are taken.

conscience which connected with the "common conscience" of mankind. This fundamental identity, he was convinced, could be demonstrated by the learning process itself which he defined as "sympathy and imitation, the moral action of the teacher upon the children, of the children upon him, and each other." He saw in the school, therefore, a model of the good community where self-discovery led to a social exchange culminating in the recognition of universal dependency and brotherhood. The ideal society—the society he hoped to create—was one in which individuals could be totally free to follow their own natures because such pursuit would inevitably end in social harmony. For Alcott the community was the product rather than the creator of the good life.

Fruitlands, Alcott's attempt to apply the lessons of the Temple School on a larger scale, was designed to prove that perfectionist educational reform affected the "economies of life." In this realization lay the real import of Alcott's reform ideas; for education, seen as a way of life, meant the communitarian experiment as an educative model. Pushed to its limits, the perfectionist assault on institutions logically ended in the attempt to make new and better societies as examples for Americans to follow. Communitarianism, as Alcott envisioned it, was the social extension of his perfectionist belief in education as an alternative to politics.

In the case of other humanitarian reformers like Samuel Gridley Howe perfectionism determined even more precisely both the role and intellectual content of their proposals. Howe's ideal of the good society seems to have derived from his experiences in Greece where, during his last year, he promoted a communitarian plan for resettling exiles on the Gulf of Corinth. With government support he established his colony, "Washingtonia," on two thousand acres of arable land, selected the colonists himself, bought cattle and tools, managed its business affairs, and supervised a Lancastrian school. By his own admission these were the happiest days of his life: "I laboured here day & night in season & out; & was governor, legislator, clerk, constable, & everything but patriarch."⁶ When the government withdrew its support and brigands overran the colony, Howe was forced to abandon the project and return home. Still, the idea of an entire community under the care of a "patriarch" shouldering its collective burden and absorbing all its dependents in a cooperative life continued to dominate the "Doctor's" reform thinking and to determine his methods.

The ethical imperatives in Howe's philosophy of reform remained constant. "Humanity demands that every creature in human shape should command our respect; we should recognise as a brother every being upon

⁶ Letter from Howe to Horace Mann, 1857, quoted in Harold Schwartz, *Samuel Gridley Howe* (Cambridge, 1956), p. 37.

whom God has stamped the human impress." Progress he likened to the American road. Christian individualism required that each man walk separately and at his own pace, but "the rear should not be left too far behind . . . none should be allowed to perish in their helplessness . . . the strong should help the weak, so that the whole should advance as a band of brethren." It was the duty of society itself to care for its disabled or mentally deficient members rather than to shut them up in asylums which were "offsprings of a low order of feeling." "The more I reflect upon the subject the more I see objections in principle and practice to asylums," he once wrote to a fellow-reformer. "What right have we to pack off the poor, the old, the blind into asylums? They are of us, our brothers, our sisters—they belong in families. . . ." ⁷

In Howe's ideal society, then, the handicapped, criminals and defectives would not be walled off but accepted as part of the community and perfected by constant contact with it. Two years of experimenting with education for the feeble-minded convinced him that even "idiots" could be redeemed from what he called spiritual death. "How far they can be elevated, and to what extent they may be educated, can only be shown by the experience of the future," he admitted in his report to the Massachusetts legislature but predicted confidently that "each succeeding year will show even more progress than any preceding one."⁸ He always acted on his conviction that "we shall avail ourselves of special institutions less and the common schools more" and never stopped hoping that eventually all blind children after proper training might be returned to families and public schools for their real education. He also opposed the establishment of reformatories with the argument that they only collected the refractory and vicious and made them worse. Nature mingled the defective in common families, he insisted, and any departure from her standards stunted moral growth. He took as his model for reform the Belgian town of Geel where mentally ill patients were boarded at public expense with private families and allowed maximum freedom. As soon as the building funds were available he introduced the cottage system at Perkins, a plan he also wanted to apply to reformatories. No artificial and unnatural institution could replace the family which Howe considered the primary agency in the perfection of the individual.

Howe shared his bias against institutions and a preference for the family unit with other humanitarian reformers like Robert Hartley and Charles Loring Brace. Hartley's "friendly visitors" were dispatched to

⁷ Letter from Howe to William Chapin, 1857, quoted in Laura E. Richards, *Letters and Journals of Samuel Gridley Howe* (2 vols.; New York, 1909), II, 48.

⁸ Second Report of the Commissioners on Idiocy to the Massachusetts Legislature (1849), quoted in Richards, *Howe*, II, 214.

New York's poor with instructions to bring the gospel of self-help home to every member of the family. Agents of the AICP dispensed advice and improving literature along with the coal and groceries. Only gradually did the organization incorporate "incidental labors"—legislative programs for housing reform, health regulations and child labor—into its system of reform. Hartley's real hope for the new urban poor lay in their removal to the country where a bootstrap operation might lift them to sufficiency and selfhood. "Escape then from the city," he told them, "—for escape is your only recourse against the terrible ills of beggary; and the further you go, the better."⁹ In Hartley's formula the perfectionist doctrine of the salvation of the individual combined with the conservative appeal of the safety-valve.

A pronounced hostility to cities also marked the program of Charles Loring Brace's Children's Aid Society, the central feature of which was the plan for relocating children of the "squalid poor" on upstate New York farms for "moral disinfection." The Society's placement service resettled thousands of slum children in the years before the Civil War in the belief that a proper family environment and a rural setting would release the naturally good tendencies in young people so that under the supervision of independent and hard-working farmers they would save themselves.¹⁰

There was thus a high nostalgic content in the plans of humanitarians who emphasized pastoral virtues and the perfectionist values inherent in country living. Their celebration of the restorative powers of nature followed logically from their assumption that the perfected individual—the truly free American—could be created only by the reunification of mental and physical labor. The rural life, it was assumed, could revive and sustain the unified sensibility threatened by the city. A second assumption concerned the importance of the family as the primary unit in the reconstruction of society. As the great debate among social reformers proceeded it centered on the question of the limits to which the natural family could be extended. Could an entire society, as the more radical communitarians argued, be reorganized as one huge family? Or were there natural boundaries necessary for preserving order and morality? On the whole, the more conservative humanitarians agreed with Howe in rejecting those communal plans which, like Fourier's, stemmed

⁹ New York A.I.C.P., *The Mistake* (New York, 1850), p. 4, quoted in Robert H. Bremner, *From the Depths: the Discovery of Poverty in the United States* (New York, 1956), p. 38.

¹⁰ Brace's views are set forth in his *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Among Them* (New York, 1872). For a brief treatment of his relation to the moral reform movement see Bremner, *From the Depths*, chap. iii.

from too high an estimate of "the capacity of mankind for family affections." ¹¹

That intensive education held the key to illimitable progress, however, few humanitarian reformers denied. They were strengthened in their certainty by the absolutes inherited from moral reform. Thus Howe, for example, considered his work a "new field" of "practical religion." The mental defective, he was convinced, was the product of sin—both the sin of the parents and the sin of society in allowing the offspring to languish in mental and moral darkness. Yet the social evils incident to sin were not inevitable; they were not "inherent in the very constitution of man" but the "chastisements sent by a loving Father to bring his children to obedience to his beneficent laws."¹² These laws—infinite perfectibility and social responsibility—reinforced each other in the truly progressive society. The present condition of the dependent classes in America was proof of "the immense space through which society has yet to advance before it even approaches the perfection of civilization which is attainable."¹³ Education, both the thorough training of the deprived and the larger education of American society to its obligations, would meet the moral challenge.

The perfectionist uses of education as an alternative to political reform were most thoroughly explored by Horace Mann. Mann's initial investment in public school education was dictated by his fear that American democracy, lacking institutional checks and restraints, was fast degenerating into "the spectacle of gladiatorial contests" conducted at the expense of the people. Could laws save American society? Mann thought not.

With us, the very idea of legislation is reversed. Once, the law prescribed the actions and shaped the wills of the multitude; here the wills of the multitude prescribe and shape the law . . . now when the law is weak, the passions of the multitude have gathered irresistible strength, it is fallacious and insane to look for security in the moral force of law. Government and law . . . will here be moulded into the similitude of the public mind. . . .¹⁴

In offering public school education as the only effective countervailing force in a democracy Mann seemingly was giving vent to a conservative

¹¹ Letter from Howe to Charles Sumner, Apr. 8, 1847, quoted in Richards, *Howe*, II, 255-56.

¹² First Report of the Commissioners on Idiocy (1848), quoted in Richards, *Howe*, II, 210-11.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 210-11.

¹⁴ Horace Mann, "The Necessity of Education in a Republican Government," *Lectures on Education* (Boston, 1845), pp. 152, 158.

dread of unregulated change in a society where, as he admitted, the momentum of hereditary opinion was spent. Where there was no "surgical code of laws" reason, conscience and benevolence would have to be provided by education. "The whole mass of mind must be instructed in regard to its comprehensive and enduring interests." In a republican government, however, compulsion was theoretically undesirable and practically unavailable. People could not be driven up a "dark avenue" even though it were the right one. Mann, like his evangelical predecessors, found his solution in an educational crusade.

Let the intelligent visit the ignorant, day by day, as the oculist visits the blind mind, and detaches the scales from his eyes, until the living sense leaps to light. . . . Let the love of beautiful reason, the admonitions of conscience, the sense of religious responsibility, be plied, in mingled tenderness and earnestness, until the obdurate and dark mass of avarice and ignorance and prejudice shall be dissipated by their blended light and heat.¹⁵

Here in Mann's rhetorical recasting was what appeared to be the old evangelical prescription for tempering democratic excess. The chief problem admittedly was avoiding the "disturbing forces of party and sect and faction and clan." To make sure that education remained non-partisan the common schools should teach on the "*exhibitory*" method, "by an actual exhibition of the principle we would inculcate."

Insofar as the exhibitory method operated to regulate or direct public opinion, it was conservative. But implicit in Mann's theory was a commitment to perfectionism which gradually altered his aims until in the twelfth and final report education emerges as a near-utopian device for making American politics simple, clean and, eventually, superfluous. In the Twelfth Report Mann noted that although a public school system might someday guarantee "sufficiency, comfort, competence" to every American, as yet "imperfect practice" had not matched "perfect theory." Then in an extended analysis of social trends which foreshadowed Henry George's classification he singled out "poverty" and "profusion" as the two most disturbing facts in American development. "With every generation, fortunes increase on the one hand, and some new privation is added to poverty on the other. We are verging toward those extremes of opulence and penury, each of which unhumanizes the mind."¹⁶ A new

¹⁵ "An Historical View of Education; Showing Its Dignity and Its Degradation," *Lectures on Education*, pp. 260, 262.

¹⁶ This quotation and the ones from Mann that follow are taken from the central section of the *Twelfth Report* entitled "Intellectual Education as a Means of Removing Poverty, and Securing Abundance," Mary Peabody Mann, *Life of Horace Mann*

feudalism threatened; and unless a drastic remedy was discovered, the "hideous evils" of unequal distribution of wealth would cause class war.

Mann's alternative to class conflict proved to be nothing less than universal education based on the exhibitory model of the common school. Diffusion of education, he pointed out, meant wiping out class lines and with them the possibility of conflict. As the great equalizer of condition it would supply the balance-wheel in the society of the future. Lest his readers confuse his suggestions with the fantasies of communitarians Mann hastened to point out that education would perfect society through the individual by creating new private resources. Given full play in a democracy, education gave each man the "independence and the means by which he can resist the selfishness of other men."

Once Mann had established education as an alternative to political action, it remained to uncover its utopian possibilities. By enlarging the "cultivated class" it would widen the area of social feelings—"if this education should be universal and complete, it would do more than all things else to obliterate factitious distinctions in society." Political reformers and revolutionaries based their schemes on the false assumption that the amount of wealth in America was fixed by fraud and force, and that the few were rich because the many were poor. By demanding a redistribution of wealth by legislative fiat they overlooked the power of education to obviate political action through the creation of new and immense sources of wealth.

Thus in Mann's theory as in the programs of the other humanitarians the perfection of the individual through education guaranteed illimitable progress. The constantly expanding powers of the free individual ensured the steady improvement of society until the educative process finally achieved a harmonious, self-regulating community. "And will not the community that gains its wealth in this way . . . be a model and a pattern for nations, a type of excellence to be admired and followed by the world?" The fate of free society, Mann concluded, depended upon the conversion of individuals from puppets and automatons to thinking men who were aware of the strength of the irreducible self and determined to foster it in others.

As romantic perfectionism spread across Jacksonian society it acquired an unofficial and only partly acceptable philosophy in the "systematic subjectivism" of transcendental theory.¹⁷ Transcendentalism, as its official

(4 vols.; Boston, 1891), IV, 245-68. See also the perceptive comments on Mann in Rush Welter, *Popular Education and Democratic Thought in America* (New York, 1962), pp. 97-102, from which I have drawn.

¹⁷ The phrase is Santayana's in "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy." For an analysis of the anti-institutional aspects of transcendentalism and reform see Stanley Elkins, *Slavery* (Chicago, 1959), chap. iii.

historian noted, claimed for all men what a more restrictive Christian perfectionism extended only to the redeemed. Seen in this light, self-culture—Emerson's "perfect unfolding of our individual nature"—appeared as a secular amplification of the doctrine of personal holiness. In the transcendentalist definition, true reform proceeded from the individual and worked outward through the family, the neighborhood and ultimately into the social and political life of the community. The transcendentalist, Frothingham noted in retrospect, "was less a reformer of human circumstances than a regenerator of the human spirit. . . . With movements that did not start from this primary assumption of individual dignity, and come back to that as their goal, he had nothing to do."¹⁸ Emerson's followers, like the moral reformers and the humanitarians, looked to individuals rather than to institutions, to "high heroic example" rather than to political programs. The Brook-Farmer John Sullivan Dwight summed up their position when he protested that "men are anterior to systems. Great doctrines are not the origins, but the product of great lives."¹⁹

Accordingly the transcendentalists considered institutions—parties, churches, organizations—so many arbitrarily constructed barriers on the road to self-culture. They were lonely men, Emerson admitted, who repelled influences. "They are not good citizens; not good members of society. . . ." ²⁰ A longing for solitude led them out of society, Emerson to the woods where he found no Jacksonian placards on the trees, Thoreau to his reclusive leadership of a majority of one. Accepting for the most part Emerson's dictum that one man was a counterpoise to a city, the transcendentalists turned inward to examine the divine self and find there the material with which to rebuild society. They wanted to avoid at all costs the mistake of their Jacksonian contemporaries who in order to be useful accommodated themselves to institutions without realizing the resultant loss of power and integrity.

The most immediate effect of perfectionism on the transcendentalists, as on the humanitarians, was the development of a set of concepts which, in stressing reform by example, opened up new roles for the alienated intellectual. In the first place, self-culture accounted for their ambivalence toward reform politics. It was not simply Emerson's reluctance to raise the siege on his hencoop that kept him apart, but a genuine confusion as to the proper role for the reformer. If government was simply a "job" and American society the senseless competition of the market-

¹⁸ Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *Transcendentalism in New England* (Harper Torchbooks ed.: New York, 1959), p. 155.

¹⁹ John Sullivan Dwight as quoted in Frothingham, *Transcendentalism*, p. 147.

²⁰ "The Transcendentalist," *Works*, I, 347-48.

place, how could the transcendentalist accept either as working premises? The transcendentalist difficulty in coming to terms with democratic politics could be read in Emerson's confused remark that of the two parties contending for the presidency in 1840 one had the better principles, the other the better men. Driven by their profound distaste for manipulation and chicanery, many of Emerson's followers took on the role of a prophet standing aloof from elections, campaigns and party caucuses and dispensing wisdom (often in oblique Emersonian terminology) out of the vast private resources of the self. In this sense transcendentalism, like Christian perfectionism, represented a distinct break with the prevailing Jacksonian views of democratic leadership and the politics of compromise and adjustment.

One of the more appealing versions of the transcendental role was the hero or genius to whom everything was permitted, as Emerson said, because "genius is the character of illimitable freedom." The heroes of the world, Margaret Fuller announced, were the true theocratic kings: "The hearts of men make music at their approach; the mind of the age is like the historian of their passing; and only men of destiny like themselves shall be permitted to write their eulogies, or fill their vacancies."²¹ Margaret Fuller herself spent her transcendentalist years stalking the American hero, which she somehow confused with Emerson, before she joined the Roman Revolution in 1849 and discovered the authentic article in the mystic nationalist Mazzini.

Carlyle complained to Emerson of the "perilous altitudes" to which the transcendentalists' search for the hero led them. Despite his own penchant for hero-worship he came away from reading the *Dial* "with a kind of shudder." In their pursuit of the self-contained hero they seemed to separate themselves from "this same cotton-spinning, dollar-hunting, canting and shrieking, very wretched generation of ours."²² The transcendentalists, however, were not trying to escape the Jacksonian world of fact, only to find a foothold for their perfectionist individualism in it. They sought a way of implementing their ideas of self-culture without corrupting them with the false values of materialism. They saw a day coming when parties and politicians would be obsolescent. By the 1850s Walt Whitman thought that day had already arrived and that America had outgrown parties.

What right has any one political party, no matter which, to wield the American government? No right at all . . . and every American young man must have sense enough to comprehend this. I have said the old

²¹ Such was her description of Lamennais and Beranger as quoted in Mason Wade, *Margaret Fuller* (New York, 1940), 195.

²² Quoted in Wade, *Margaret Fuller*, pp. 88-89.

parties are defunct; but there remains of them empty flesh, putrid mouths, mumbling and speaking the tones of these conventions, the politicians standing back in shadow, telling lies, trying to delude and frighten the people. . . .²³

Whitman's romantic alternative was a "love of comrades" cementing an American brotherhood and upholding a redeemer president.

A somewhat similar faith in the mystical fraternity informed Theodore Parker's plan for spiritual revolution. Like the other perfectionists, Parker began by reducing society to its basic components—individuals, the "monads" or "primitive atoms" of the social order—and judged it by its tendency to promote or inhibit individualism. "Destroy the individuality of those atoms, . . . all is gone. To mar the atoms is to mar the mass. To preserve itself, therefore, society is to preserve the individuality of the individual."²⁴ In Parker's theology perfectionist Christianity and transcendental method merged to form a loving brotherhood united by the capacity to apprehend primary truths directly. A shared sense of the divinity of individual man held society together; without it no true community was possible. Looking around him at ante-bellum America, Parker found only the wrong kind of individualism, the kind that said, "I am as good as you, so get out of my way." The right kind, the individualism whose motto was "You are as good as I, and let us help one another,"²⁵ was to be the work of Parker's spiritual revolution. He explained the method of revolution as one of "*intellectual, moral and religious education*—everywhere and for all men." Until universal education had done its work Parker had little hope for political stability in the United States. He called instead for a new "party" to be formed in society at large, a party built on the idea that "God still inspires men as much as ever; that he is immanent in spirit as in space." Such a party required no church, tradition or scripture. "It believes God is near the soul as matter to the sense. . . . It calls God father and mother, not king; Jesus, brother, not redeemer, heaven home, religion nature."²⁶

Parker believed that this "philosophical party in politics," as he called it, was already at work in the 1850s on a code of universal laws from which to deduce specific legislation "so that each statute in the code shall

²³ Walt Whitman, "The Eighteenth Presidency," an essay unpublished in Whitman's lifetime, in *Walt Whitman's Workshop*, ed. Clifton Joseph Furness (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 104-5.

²⁴ Quoted in Daniel Aaron, *Men of Good Hope* (Oxford paperback ed.: New York, 1961), p. 35.

²⁵ Theodore Parker, "The Political Destination of America and the Signs of the Times" (1848) excerpted in *The Transcendentalists*, ed. Perry Miller (Anchor ed.: Garden City, N. Y., 1957), p. 357.

²⁶ Quoted in R. W. B. Lewis, *The American Adam* (Chicago, 1955), p. 182.

represent a fact in the universe, a point of thought in God; so . . . that legislation shall be divine in the same sense that a true system of astronomy be divine." Parker's holy band represented the full fruition of the perfectionist idea of a "Christian party" in America, a party of no strict political or sectarian definition, but a true reform movement, apostolic in its beginnings but growing with the truths it preached until it encompassed all Americans in a huge brotherhood of divine average men. Party members, unlike time-serving Whigs and Democrats, followed ideas and intuitions rather than prejudice and precedent, and these ideas led them to question authority, oppose legal injustice and tear down rotten institutions. The philosophical party was not to be bound by accepted notions of political conduct or traditional attitudes toward law. When unjust laws interpose barriers to progress, reformers must demolish them.

So Parker himself reasoned when he organized the Vigilance Committee in Boston to defeat the Fugitive Slave Law. His reasoning epitomized perfectionist logic: every man may safely trust his conscience, properly informed, because it is the repository for divine truth. When men learn to trust their consciences and act on them, they naturally encourage others to do the same with the certainty that they will reach the same conclusions. Individual conscience thus creates a social conscience and a collective will to right action. Concerted right action means moral revolution. The fact that moral revolution, in its turn, might mean political revolt was a risk Parker and his perfectionist followers were willing to take.

Both transcendentalism and perfectionist moral reform, then, were marked by an individualist fervor that was disruptive of American institutions. Both made heavy moral demands on church and state; and when neither proved equal to the task of supporting their intensely personal demands, the transcendentalists and the moral reformers became increasingly alienated. The perfectionist temperament bred a come-outer spirit. An insistence on individual moral accountability and direct appeal to the irreducible self, the faith in self-reliance and distrust of compromise, and a substitution of universal education for partial reform measures, all meant that normal political and institutional reform channels were closed to the perfectionists. Alternate routes to the millennium had to be found. One of these was discovered by a new leadership which made reform a branch of prophecy. Another was opened by the idea of a universal reawakening of the great god self. But there was a third possibility, also deeply involved with the educational process, an attempt to build the experimental community as a reform model. With an increasing number of reformers after 1840 perfectionist anti-institutionalism led to heavy investments in the communitarian movement.

The attraction that drew the perfectionists to communitarianism came from their conviction that the good society should be simple. Since American society was both complicated and corrupt, it was necessary to come out from it; but at the same the challenge of the simple life had to be met. Once the true principles of social life had been discovered they had to be applied, some way found to harness individual perfectibility to a social engine. This urge to form the good community, as John Humphrey Noyes experienced it himself and perceived it in other reformers, provided the connection between perfectionism and communitarianism, or, as Noyes put it, between "Revivalism" and "Socialism." Perfectionist energies directed initially against institutions were diverted to the creation of small self-contained communities as educational models. In New England two come-outer abolitionists, Adin Ballou and George Benson, founded cooperative societies at Hopedale and Northampton, while a third Garrisonian lieutenant, John Collins, settled his followers on a farm in Skaneateles, New York. Brook Farm, Fruitlands and the North American Phalanx at Redbank acquired notoriety in their own day; but equally significant, both in terms of origins and personnel, were the experiments at Raritan Bay under the guidance of Marcus Spring, the Marlboro Association in Ohio, the Prairie Home Community of former Hicksite Quakers, and the Swedenborgian Brocton Community. In these and other experimental communities could be seen the various guises of perfectionism.

Communitarianism promised drastic social reform without violence. Artificiality and corruption could not be wiped out by partial improvements and piecemeal measures but demanded a total change which, as Robert Owen once explained, "could make an immediate, and almost instantaneous, revolution in the minds and manners of society in which it shall be introduced." Communitarians agreed in rejecting class struggle which set interest against interest instead of uniting them through association. "Whoever will examine the question of social ameliorations," Albert Brisbane argued in support of Fourier, "must be convinced that the gradual perfecting of Civilization is useless as a remedy for present social evils, and that the only effectual means of doing away with indigence, idleness and the dislike for labor is to do away with civilization itself, and organize Association . . . in its place."²⁷ Like the redemptive moment in conversion or the experience of self-discovery in transcendentalist thought, the communitarian ideal pointed to a sharp break with existing society and a commitment to root-and-branch reform. On the other hand, the community was seen as a controlled experiment in which

²⁷ Albert Brisbane, *Social Destiny of Man*, p. 286, quoted in Arthur Eugene Bestor, *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America: 1663-1829* (Philadelphia, 1950), p. 9.

profound but peaceful change might be effected without disturbing the larger social order. Massive change, according to communitarian theory, could also be gradual and harmonious if determined by the model.

Perfectionist religious and moral reform shaded into communitarianism, in the case of a number of social reformers, with the recognition that the conversion of the individual was a necessary preparation for and logically required communal experimentation. Such was John Humphrey Noyes' observation that in the years after 1815 "the line of socialistic excitement lies parallel with the line of religious Revivals. . . . The Revivalists had for their one great idea the regeneration of the soul. The great idea of the Socialists was the regeneration of society, which is the soul's environment. These ideas belong together and are the complements of each other."²⁸ So it seemed to Noyes' colleagues in the communitarian movement. The course from extreme individualism to communitarianism can be traced in George Ripley's decision to found Brook Farm. Trying to win Emerson to his new cause, he explained that his own personal tastes and habits would have led him away from plans and projects. "I have a passion for being independent of the world, and of every man in it. This I could do easily on the estate which is now offered. . . . I should have a city of God, on a small scale of my own. . . . But I feel bound to sacrifice this private feeling, in the hope of the great social good." That good Ripley had no difficulty in defining in perfectionist terms:

. . . to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker, as far as possible, in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; to do away with the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all; and thus to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions.²⁹

However varied their actual experiences with social planning, all the communitarians echoed Ripley's call for translating perfectionism into concerted action and adapting the ethics of individualism to larger social units. Just as the moral reformers appealed to right conduct and conscience in individuals the communitarians sought to erect models of a

²⁸ John Humphrey Noyes, *History of American Socialism* (Philadelphia, 1870), p. 26.

²⁹ Letter from Ripley to Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nov. 9, 1840, in *Autobiography of Brook Farm*, ed. Henry W. Sams (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1958), pp. 5-8.

collective conscience to educate Americans. Seen in this light, the communitarian faith in the model was simply an extension of the belief in individual perfectibility. Even the sense of urgency characterizing moral reform was carried over into the communities where a millennial expectation flourished. The time to launch their projects, the social planners believed, was the immediate present when habits and attitudes were still fluid, before entrenched institutions had hardened the American heart and closed the American mind. To wait for a full quota of useful members or an adequate supply of funds might be to miss the single chance to make the country perfect. The whole future of America seemed to them to hinge on the fate of their enterprises.

Some of the projects were joint-stock corporations betraying a middle-class origin; others were strictly communistic. Some, like the Shaker communities, were pietistic and rigid; others, like Oneida and Hopedale, open and frankly experimental. Communitarians took a lively interest in each others' projects and often joined one or another of them for a season before moving on to try utopia on their own. The division between religious and secular attempts was by no means absolute: both types of communities advertised an essentially religious brand of perfectionism. Nor was economic organization always an accurate means of distinguishing the various experiments, most of which were subjected to periodic constitutional overhauling and frequent readjustment, now in the direction of social controls and now toward relaxation of those controls in favor of individual initiative.

The most striking characteristic of the communitarian movement was not its apparent diversity but the fundamental similarity of educational purpose. The common denominator or "main idea" Noyes correctly identified as "*the enlargement of home—the extension of family union beyond the little man-and-wife circle to large corporations.*"³⁰ Communities as different as Fruitlands and Hopedale, Brook Farm and Northampton, Owenite villages and Fourier phalansteries were all, in one way or another, attempting to expand and apply self-culture to groups. Thus the problem for radical communitarians was to solve the conflict between the family and society. In commenting on the failure of the Brook Farmers to achieve a real community, Charles Lane, Alcott's associate at Fruitlands, identified what he considered the basic social question of the day—"whether the existence of the marital family is compatible with that of the universal family, which the term 'Community' signifies."³¹ A few of the communitarians, recognizing this conflict, attempted to solve it by changing or

³⁰ Noyes, *American Socialisms*, p. 23.

³¹ Charles Lane, "Brook Farm," *Dial*, IV (Jan. 1844), 351-57, reprinted in Sams, *Brook Farm*, pp. 87-92.

destroying the institution of marriage. For the most part, the perfectionist communitarians shied away from any such radical alteration of the family structure and instead sought a law of association by which the apparently antagonistic claims of private and universal love could be harmonized. Once this law was known and explained, they believed, then the perfect society was possible—a self-adjusting mechanism constructed in accordance with their recently discovered law of human nature.

Inevitably communitarianism developed a “science of society,” either the elaborate social mathematics of Fourier or the constitutional mechanics of native American perfectionists. The appeal of the blueprint grew overwhelming: in one way or another almost all the communitarians succumbed to the myth of the mathematically precise arrangement, searching for the perfect number or the exact size, plotting the precise disposition of working forces and living space, and combining these estimates in a formula which would ensure perfect concord. The appeal of Fourierism stemmed from its promise to reconcile productive industry with “passional attractions.” “Could this be done,” John Sullivan Dwight announced, “the word ‘necessity’ would acquire an altogether new and pleasanter meaning; the outward necessity and the inward prompting for every human being would be one and identical, and his life a living harmony.”³² Association fostered true individuality which, in turn, guaranteed collective accord. In an intricate calculation involving ascending and descending wings and a central point of social balance where attractions equalled destinies the converts to Fourierism contrived a utopian alternative to politics. The phalanx represented a self-perpetuating system for neutralizing conflict and ensuring perfection. The power factor—politics—had been dropped out; attraction alone provided the stimulants necessary to production and progress. Here in the mathematical model was the culmination of the “peaceful revolution” which was to transform America.

The communitarian experiments in effect were anti-institutional institutions. In abandoning political and religious institutions the communitarians were driven to create perfect societies of their own which conformed to their perfectionist definition of the free individual. Their communities veered erratically between the poles of anarchism and collectivism as they hunted feverishly for a way of eliminating friction without employing coercion, sure that once they had found it, they could apply it in a federation of model societies throughout the country. In a limited sense, perhaps, their plans constituted an escape from urban

³² John Sullivan Dwight, “Association in its Connection with Education,” a lecture delivered before the New England Fourier Society, in Boston, Feb. 29, 1844. Excerpted in Sams, *Brook Farm*, pp. 104-5.

complexity and the loneliness of alienation. But beneath the nostalgia there lay a vital reform impulse and a driving determination to make American society over through the power of education.

The immediate causes of the collapse of the communities ranged from loss of funds and mismanagement to declining interest and disillusionment with imperfect human material. Behind these apparent reasons, however, stood the real cause in the person of the perfectionist self, Margaret Fuller's "mountainous me," that proved too powerful a disruptive force for even the anti-institutional institutions it had created. It was the perfectionist ego which allowed the communitarian reformers to be almost wholly nonselective in recruiting their membership and to put their trust in the operation of an atomistic general will. Constitution-making and paper bonds, as it turned out, were not enough to unite divine egoists in a satisfactory system for the free expression of the personality. Perfectionist individualism did not make the consociate family. The result by the 1850s was a profound disillusionment with the principle of association which, significantly, coincided with the political crisis over slavery. Adin Ballou, his experiment at Hopedale in shambles, summarized the perfectionist mood of despair when he added that "few people are near enough right in heart, head and habits to live in close social intimacy."³³ Another way would have to be found to carry divine principles into social arrangements, one that took proper account of the individual.

The collapse of the communitarian movement in the 1850s left a vacuum in social reform which was filled by the slavery crisis. At first their failure to consolidate alternative social and educational institutions threw the reformers back on their old perfectionist individualism for support. It was hardly fortuitous that Garrison, Mann, Thoreau, Howe, Parker, Channing, Ripley and Emerson himself responded to John Brown's raid with a defense of the liberated conscience. But slavery, as a denial of freedom and individual responsibility, had to be destroyed by institutional forces which could be made to sustain these values. The antislavery cause during the secession crisis and throughout the Civil War offered reformers an escape from alienation by providing a new identity with the very political institutions which they had so vigorously assailed.

The effects of the Civil War as an intellectual counterrevolution were felt both in a revival of institutions and a renewal of an organic theory of society. The war brought with it a widespread reaction against the seeming sentimentality and illusions of perfectionism. It saw the establishment of new organizations like the Sanitary and the Christian Commissions run on principles of efficiency and professionalism totally alien

³³ Letter from Ballou to Theodore Weld, Dec. 23, 1856, quoted in Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom* (New Brunswick, N. J., 1950), p. 229.

to perfectionist methods. Accompanying the wartime revival of institutions was a theological reorientation directed by Horace Bushnell and other conservative churchmen whose longstanding opposition to perfectionism seemed justified by the war. The extreme individualism of the ante-bellum reformers was swallowed up in a Northern war effort that made private conscience less important than saving the Union. Some of the abolitionists actually substituted national unity for freedom for the slave as the primary war aim. Those reformers who contributed to the war effort through the Sanitary Commission or the Christian Commission found a new sense of order and efficiency indispensable. Older perfectionists, like Dorothea Dix, unable to adjust to new demands, found their usefulness drastically confined. Young Emersonians returned from combat convinced that professionalism, discipline and subordination, dubious virtues by perfectionist standards, were essential in a healthy society. A new emphasis on leadership and performance was replacing the benevolent amateurism of the perfectionists.

Popular education and ethical agitation continued to hold the post-war stage, but the setting for them had changed. The three principal theorists of social reform in post-war industrial America—Henry George, Henry Demarest Lloyd and Edward Bellamy—denounced class conflict, minimized the importance of purely political reform, and, like their perfectionist precursors, called for moral revolution. The moral revolution which they demanded, however, was not the work of individuals in whom social responsibility developed as a by-product of self-discovery but the ethical revival of an entire society made possible by the natural development of social forces. Their organic view of society required new theories of personality and new concepts of role-playing, definitions which appeared variously in George's law of integration, Lloyd's religion of love, and Bellamy's economy of happiness. And whereas Nemesis in the perfectionist imagination had assumed the shape of personal guilt and estrangement from a pre-established divine order, for the post-war reformers it took on the social dimensions of a terrifying relapse into barbarism. Finally, the attitudes of the reformers toward individualism itself began to change as Darwinism with the aid of a false analogy twisted the pre-war doctrine of self-reliance into a weapon against reform. It was to protest against a Darwinian psychology of individual isolation that Lloyd wrote his final chapter of *Wealth Against Commonwealth*, declaring that the regeneration of the individual was only a half-truth and that "the reorganization of the society which he makes and which makes him is the other half."

We can become individual only by submitting to be bound to others. We extend our freedom only by finding new laws to obey. . . . The isolated man is a mere rudiment of an individual. But he who has become citizen, neighbor, friend, brother, son, husband, father, fellow-member, in one is just so many times individualized.³⁴

Lloyd's plea for a new individualism could also be read as an obituary for perfectionist romantic reform.

³⁴ Henry Demarest Lloyd, *Wealth Against Commonwealth* (Spectrum paperback ed.: Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1963), pp. 174, 178.



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Antislavery Ambivalence: Immediatism, Expediency, Race*

OF CONSTANT DISTRESS TO STUDENTS OF THE AMERICAN ANTISLAVERY MOVEMENT has been its ambivalence, especially its ambivalence over the term Immediatism. The term had originally defined a means to end British colonial slavery, but it failed to be similarly applicable to emancipation in the American South. Therefore the antislavery movement strained to give new meaning to emancipation. "*instant and universal.*" Did it not really mean gradual emancipation immediately begun or, perhaps, immediate emancipation gradually achieved? But no less than over immediatism, antislavery crusaders were beset by a fundamental ambivalence in their attitude toward the Negro himself. At the simplest level there was no issue. Slavery was sin; and the crusaders were moved to free the slave by a humanitarianism too genuine to be doubted.¹ Yet, sympathetic as they might appear and believe themselves to be toward the Negro, the abolitionists were, as Leon Litwack and others have shown, in part at least prejudiced against him.² And the variety of their response toward him demonstrates the ambivalence so characteristic of the antislavery movement as a whole.

* This article was read, in a slightly modified form, at the annual meetings of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association, April 1965.

¹ The abolitionists were defined and set off from their contemporaries by their opposition to slavery and their concern for the welfare of the slaves, a concern which usually embraced the free Negroes as well. This article is not, however, designed to compare abolitionists as a group with nonabolitionists but rather to explore the variations within the group.

² See, for example, Leon Litwack, "The Abolitionist Dilemma: The Antislavery Movement and the Northern Negro," *New England Quarterly*, XXXIV (1961), 50-73; and his *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago, 1961). See also Larry Gara, Louis Filler, Gerda Lerner, Stanley Elkins for considerations of prejudice. For psychological probing see David Donald, Hazel Wolf, Clifford Griffin, Martin Duberman.

Endemic was the abolitionists' tendency toward abstraction. Frequently they so abstracted both the "Negro" and the "Crusade" that they dealt not with people in a situation but only with intellectualizations in a vacuum. John Thomas has recently noted that William Lloyd Garrison failed "to understand people, black or white" and used them simply "as counters in the grim business of reform."³ His analysis echoes publisher James Gordon Bennett's conclusion made one hundred years earlier that to Garrison "nothing [was] sacred . . . but the ideal intellect of the negro race."⁴

This preoccupation with the ideal is reflected by the American Anti-Slavery Society, which, at its inception in 1833, resolved that to guarantee education to the Negro was more important than to end "corporeal slavery itself, inasmuch as ignorance enslaves the mind and tends to the ruin of the immortal soul."⁵ And, on the very eve of Emancipation, Philadelphia antislavery leader James Miller McKim, although emphasizing the importance of slave rehabilitation and active in prosecuting it, thought that it was "not the place . . . of [the] abolitionists to descend to the details of th[e] work, teaching, and the like; let this," he added, "be attended to by the neophytes and others. We are to continue to be what we always have been," he concluded, "a wheel within a wheel; an original motive power."⁶ Thus for thirty years abolitionists, to a greater or lesser extent, heeded the kind of exhortation which Henry C. Wright enunciated so forcefully:

Watch, Sister, & pray that you enter not into temptation. *Watch, not . . . for Abolition as an Organization, not even for our millions of crushed & bleeding slaves . . . , but watch for the eternal, immutable Principles of Justice & Right—watch for Humanity. . . . We are seeking an object that must command the respect of the world—i.e. the redemption of man from the dominion of man.* This is Abolition.⁷

The abolitionists did, of course, at least partly understand their own position. They may not have realized just how fully they were depersonalizing the Negroes; but they were quite aware that they had difficulties

³ John L. Thomas, *The Liberator, William Lloyd Garrison, A Biography* (Boston, 1963), p. 153.

⁴ Quoted in Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879; The Story of His Life as Told by His Children* (4 vols.; New York, 1885-89), III, 283.

⁵ American Anti-Slavery Society, *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention, Assembled at Philadelphia, December 4, 5, and 6, 1833* (New York, 1833), p. 19.

⁶ James Miller McKim to Samuel J. May, May 20 [1862], in Samuel J. May Papers, Cornell University.

⁷ Henry C. Wright to Maria Weston Chapman, May 2, 1839, in Weston Papers, Anti-slavery Collection, Boston Public Library.

in matching their protestations to their actions. "We are," said the Connecticut crusader Samuel J. May with a Zolaesque directness, "culpably ignorant of, or shamefully indifferent to the wrongs which are inflicted upon our colored brethren. . . . We are prejudiced against the blacks; and our prejudices are indurated . . . by the secret, vague consciousness of the wrong we are doing them. Men are apt to dislike those most, whom they have injured most."⁸ And despite the teaching of the anti-slavery periodical, the *Abolitionist*, that the antislavery enthusiast ought "to banish from his own mind the unworthy feelings which would lead him to regard any human being with contempt merely on account of his color," New York abolitionist Lewis Tappan admitted "that when the subject of acting out our profound principles in treating men irrespective of color is discussed heat is always produced."⁹

This much, then, the abolitionists themselves perceived. But for the student of the antislavery movement it is also imperative to recognize that prejudice and abstraction were but the obvious symptoms of an ambivalence which gives to the antislavery crusade in the expediency and temporizing of its actions and in the complexity of its thought an architecture baroque in the richness of its variations.¹⁰

It was, for example, relatively simple to accept the humanity of the Negro; but then how did one account for his patently submerged position vis-à-vis the whites? Abolitionists like Lydia Maria Child of Northampton, Massachusetts, tried to link the two elements by admitting that, while all Negroes were not "Scotts or Miltos," they were "men, capable of producing their proportion of Scotts and Miltos, if they could be allowed to live in a state of physical and intellectual freedom."¹¹ At the other extreme the New York Whig politician, William Henry Seward,

⁸ Samuel J. May, Sermon delivered May 29, 1831, in Boston, as reported in *Liberator*, July 23, 1831.

⁹ *Abolitionist*, I (Jan. 1833), as quoted in Merton L. Dillon, "The Failure of the American Abolitionists," *Journal of Southern History*, XXV (1959), 167. Lewis Tappan, Diary entry [Apr. 1836], as quoted in Litwack, *North of Slavery*, p. 218. See also Garrison's July 4, 1829 oration (*Garrison*, I, 133-34); Susan Cabot, *What Have We, as Individuals, To Do With Slavery* (American Anti-Slavery Society, *Anti-Slavery Tract No. 15*. New York, 1855), pp. 3-4; Beriah Green, *American Anti-Slavery Reporter*, I (June 1834), 88; and Birney to William Wright, June 20, 1845, in *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857*, ed. Dwight L. Dumond (2 vols.; New York, 1938), II, 947.

¹⁰ This ideological ambivalence is reflected in the cleavages within the antislavery movement over the appropriate courses of action to be pursued. These cleavages have already been well examined in a variety of studies on antislavery published since 1935. Whether to take political action or to regard it as damaging to the requisite moral fervor, whether to expend time and funds on schools, give aid to fugitives and buy freedom for individual slaves or to work exclusively to propagate the antislavery faith are debates not only about means but also about the basic concepts of antislavery.

¹¹ Lydia Maria Child, *An Appeal in Favor of that Class of Americans Called Africans* (orig. ed. 1833. New York, 1836), p. 171.

defending the mentally deranged William Freeman in 1846, tried to subordinate intellectual lack to simple humanity and to separate it from race. He pleaded with the jury that

the color of the prisoner's skin, and the form of his features, are not impressed upon the spiritual, immortal mind which works beneath. In spite of human pride, he is still your brother, and mine, in form and color accepted and approved by his Father, and yours, and mine, and bears equally with us the proudest inheritance of our race—the image of our Maker. Hold him then to be a MAN.¹²

In denying, furthermore, that the apparent differences between Negroes and whites were not inherent the abolitionists became environmentalists. John Rankin, ex-slaveholder from Virginia and an ardent abolitionist, asserted with good will but dubious logic that, if racial inferiority were a valid criterion, then all Negroes would be inferior to all whites if but one was. Clearly this was not so. Therefore existing inferiority was explainable only in environmental terms.¹³ Slavery it was, asserted German refugee Charles Follen of Boston, that debased and degraded the Negroes and generated among whites an "absurd and cruel prejudice against color."¹⁴ The antislavery solution to prejudice was clear once the cause was thus linked to slavery. Charles Calistus Burleigh of Connecticut optimistically exhorted his fellow whites to "give [the Negro] his liberty, and as strong a motive to exertion as you have;—a prospect of reward as sure and ample; not only wages for his toil, but respect and honor and social standing according to his worth, and see what he can then become."¹⁵

Yet, for all their exuberance, for all their belief in equality, for all their efforts to raise the Negro above the debilitating influences of adverse environment, the abolitionists were never wholly convincing. Much of what they said betrayed an implicit and at times explicit belief in racial

¹² William Henry Seward, *Argument in Defense of William Freeman on his Trial for Murder . . .* (4th ed.; Auburn, N. Y., 1846), pp. 8-9. See also C. T. C. Follen, *Works, with a Memoir of His Life* [by Mrs. E. L. Follen] (5 vols.; Boston, 1841), I, 627-28.

¹³ John Rankin, *Letters on American Slavery Addressed to Mr. Thomas Rankin . . .* (5th ed.; Boston, 1838), pp. 10-11. See also Lewis Tappan, *The Life of Arthur Tappan* (New York, 1870), p. 131; James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball, *Emancipation in the West Indies. A Six Months Tour in Antigua, Barbadoes, and Jamaica in the Year 1837* (American Anti-Slavery Society, *Anti-Slavery Examiner No. 7*. New York, 1838), p. 75; and Sallie Holley to Gerrit Smith, Nov. 17, 1865, in the Smith Miller Papers, Syracuse University.

¹⁴ Charles Follen, "The Cause of Freedom in Our Country," *Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine*, II (Oct. 1836), 65.

¹⁵ Charles Calistus Burleigh, *Slavery and the North* (New York [1855]), p. 4. Rankin essentially held the same view, but thought that it would take a long time to raise the Negro; see *Letters on American Slavery*, pp. 10-11.

inferiority. Here again ambivalence emerged. That the abolitionists themselves were usually unconscious of their expression of prejudice and that they denied it when challenged should surprise no one. Nor, indeed, is the thoughtful student surprised to learn that such prejudice did in fact exist. Occasionally crude, more often hidden in underlying assumptions or in appeals to science, prejudice played a more pervasive role than the logic of consistency would admit.

Exasperated by poor printing, inferior paper and numerous misprints, and spurred on by his own literary pride, Edmund Quincy lashed out in a letter to Caroline Weston in 1846 at "Wendell's nigger," whom he held responsible for botching an Antislavery Report. Never, he urged, let the printing out to "*Smart people*"; they get things up so poorly.¹⁶ Here clearly was not only a rather vulgar display of prejudice but also of a value structure in which the typography of a convention's report weighed more heavily than economic opportunity for the free Negro.

The acerbity of these outbursts may be attributed to Quincy alone. The subterranean import, however, was common property among anti-slavery people. As late as 1860 Theodore Parker, a backer of John Brown, observed that "the Anglo-Saxon with common sense does not like this Africanization of America; he wishes the superior race to multiply rather than the inferior."¹⁷ His neighbor, Samuel Gridley Howe, known for his multiple reform interests, accepted Parker's assumptions but rejected his predictions by observing that, particularly among young Canadian refugee Negroes, many succumbed to "mesenteric and other glandular diseases" and suffered from "phthisical diseases" and a "softening of tubercles." "Many intelligent physicians," he stated, "who have practiced among both [white and Negro] classes, say that the colored people are feebly organized; that the scrofulous temperament prevails among them; that the climate tends to development of tuberculous diseases; that they are unprolific and short-lived."¹⁸

Whether feebly organized in physique or not, the Negroes were certainly docile in temperament. "It is paying a very poor compliment, indeed, to the courage and superiority of us whites," Richard Hildreth said through the sympathetically portrayed Mr. Mason in *Archy Moore*, "to doubt whether we, superior as well in numbers as in every thing else,

¹⁶ Edmund Quincy to Caroline Weston, Feb. 1, 1846, in Weston Papers. A year later Quincy complained about Frederick Douglass' independence (what he thought was Douglass' overcharging the *American Anti-Slavery Standard* for copy supplied) by observing that "These niggers, like Kings, are kittle cattle to shoe behind." Quincy to Caroline Weston, July 2, 1847, in Weston Papers.

¹⁷ Theodore Parker, *John Brown's Expedition Reviewed in a Letter from Theodore Parker, at Rome, to Francis Jackson, Boston* (Boston, 1860), p. 14.

¹⁸ Samuel Gridley Howe, *The Refugees from Slavery in Canada West. Report to the Freedmen's Inquiry Commission* (Boston, 1864), pp. 21-22.

could not inspire awe enough to maintain our natural position at the head of the community, and to keep these poor people in order without making slaves of them."¹⁹ But, if Hildreth's Mason was fictional, the Lane Rebels were not. They had concluded, in their famous debates on slavery, that "*the blacks are abundantly able to take care of and provide for themselves*"; but had added immediately that they "*would be kind and docile if immediately emancipated.*"²⁰ This emphasis on docility is important, for quite openly it reduced the status of the Negro below that of the white man. J. Miller McKim, for example, negated American standards of self-reliance and manly independence when he praised Negroes for "their susceptibility to control."²¹

Not unreasonably, many Negroes actively resented this abolitionist presumption about their "susceptibility to control." During the 1850s, in fact, this resentment was in large part responsible for the growth and activity of the Negro Convention movement, whose purpose it was to do for the Negroes themselves what they feared the whites, at last, would not accomplish for them. Frederick Douglass and Henry Highland Garnet, two Negro leaders of marked undocility, both took umbrage at Maria Weston Chapman for her paternal concern about their appropriate behavior; and Douglass, disillusioned with radical abolitionism in the face of growing political antislavery activity and ambitious himself to assert his independence from white abolitionist domination, defied the Boston hierarchy by establishing his own newspaper in Rochester, New York. Likewise, Martin Delany, a successful Negro doctor, resented the Negroes' exclusion from antislavery leadership and was highly dubious about the abolitionists' touted support of economic opportunity for free Negroes. Delany's disillusionment led him to abandon America as a viable home for the Negro and in the late 1850s to sponsor projects for African colonization.²²

¹⁹ Richard Hildreth, *Archy Moore: The White Slave* (1st ed.; 1836. New York, 1856), p. 264.

²⁰ As reported in Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, Mar. 10, 1834, in *American Anti-Slavery Reporter*, I (Apr. 1834), 54.

²¹ James Miller McKim, *The Freedmen of South Carolina . . .* (Philadelphia, 1862), p. 9. See also *Letters from Port Royal. Written at the Time of the Civil War*, ed. Elizabeth Ware Pearson (Boston, 1906), pp. 102-3, 315-16; *The Anti-Slavery Record* III (Feb. 1837), 15; *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimké Weld and Sarah Grimké, 1822-1844*, eds. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (2 vols.; New York, 1934), II, 524; and Leon Litwack, *North of Slavery*, p. 223.

²² In the Weston Papers one may find numerous examples of the patronizing anti-slavery attitude and of Negro response to it. See also Filler, *Crusade Against Slavery*, p. 143. In particular note Frederick Douglass to Maria Weston Chapman, Mar. 29, 1846, Weston Papers; and Martin Robinson Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States Politically Considered* (Philadelphia, 1852), pp. 25-29.

Despite concepts of racial inferiority, further borne out by an almost universal preference for the lighter-skinned over the darker-skinned Negro,²³ abolitionists in fact did demand just and equitable civil liberties for colored persons. "The oppressive civil disabilities laid upon them in the non-slaveholding States, and the settled opposition to their education and elevation . . .," said the Andover Theological Seminary anti-slavery society,

are but glaring indications of the prevalent spirit of slavery. The same contempt of the black man—the same disposition to trample on his rights and to lord it over his person, follows him, whatever *degree* of emancipation he may have obtained, and in whatever part of the nation he takes his refuge. Though we had in view only the wrongs of the colored people in New-England, we should feel ourselves compelled to take our present stand, and vindicate their rights as brethren, as men, and as Americans.²⁴

Abolitionists everywhere asserted that Negroes and whites should be judged and treated according to the same standards in the apportioning not only of civil rights but also of economic and educational opportunities. In its Declaration of Sentiments the American Anti-Slavery Society announced in 1833 that

all persons of color who possess the qualifications which are demanded of others, ought to be admitted forthwith to the enjoyment of the same privileges, and the exercise of the same prerogatives, as others; and . . . the paths of preferment, of wealth, and of intelligence, should be opened as widely to them as to persons of a white complexion.²⁵

Schools, like Oberlin College and the Noyes Academy in New Hampshire, which admitted Negroes on equal terms with whites,²⁶ bore out these principles, as did Charles Sumner's argument in the Roberts Case in 1849 that separate schools were unequal and threatened cleavages in

²³ Antislavery literature contains many illustrations of the preference for lighter-skinned Negroes. See Samuel May Jr., *The Fugitive Slave Law and Its Victims* (American Anti-Slavery Society, *Anti-Slavery Tract No. 18* [New York, 1855]); George Bourne, *Slavery Illustrated in its Effects Upon Woman and Domestic Society* (Boston, 1837); Hildreth's *Archy Moore*; and William I. Bowditch, *White Slavery in the United States* (American Anti-Slavery Society, *Anti-Slavery Tract No. 2* [New York, 1855]); see also in this connection Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery as it is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, 1839); and the juvenile [Jonathan Walker], *A Picture of Slavery, for Youth. By the Author of "The Branded Hand" and "Chattelized Humanity"* (Boston, n.d.).

²⁴ This is a summary given by D. T. Kimball and F. Laine to *Genius of Temperance*, Aug. 22, 1833, as reported in *Liberator*, Sept. 28, 1833. Similar demands for equality of treatment can be found in Child, *Appeal*, pp. 195-208.

²⁵ American Anti-Slavery Society, *Proceedings of the Anti-Slavery Convention, Assembled at Philadelphia*, contains the Declaration of Sentiments.

²⁶ See *Liberator*, Oct. 25, 1834, for information about the Noyes Academy.

society.²⁷ And Samuel J. May, summing up the concept in a statement which avoided many of the pitfalls of prejudice into which his colleagues fell, averred that "all we demand for them is that negroes shall be permitted, encouraged, assisted to become as wise, as virtuous, and as rich as they can, and be acknowledged to be just what they have become, and be treated accordingly."²⁸

Yet these appeals to the efficacy of education and economic betterment reveal the middle-class values to which almost all abolitionists subscribed and which both compound and explain much of the ambivalence in the antislavery movement. As middle-class Americans, abolitionists, naturally enough, measured the Negroes against middle-class standards, and to those standards they expected the Negroes to conform—Negroes who were generally ex-slaves from the lowest and most abject class in America. Assuredly the American Anti-Slavery Society was eager to uplift them to "an equality with the whites" but only after carefully disclaiming that it approved any such non-middle-class shenanigans as adopting colored children, encouraging interracial marriages or "exciting the people of color to assume airs."²⁹

It was expected, then, that the Negroes should adapt themselves to the values of the white community, should, as one abolitionist advised, submit to prejudice "with the true dignity of meekness" so that their critics might be stilled. Thus was fulfilled the stereotype of the malleable, willing and docile colored man. Still, on limited occasions, the same writer observed, the Negroes should take a positive stand. They should demand admission to the public schools, they should organize or join lyceum groups, they should acquire knowledge and education. And, he said in a condensed version of a middle-class *Poor Richard's*, they should organize uplifting visits to their poor and degraded brethren and teach them "temperance . . . cleanliness, neatness, strict honesty, and all that belong to good morality."³⁰ In addition to these virtues, the American Anti-Slavery Society agents were admonished to instill in the free people of color

²⁷ Charles Sumner, "Equality before the Law: Unconstitutionality of Separate Colored Schools in Massachusetts. Argument before the Supreme Court of Massachusetts, in the Case of Sarah C. Roberts *v.* The City of Boston . . .," in *The Works of Charles Sumner* (Boston, 1872), II, 327-76.

²⁸ Samuel Joseph May, *Some Recollections of Our Anti-Slavery Conflict* (Boston, 1869), p. 29. See also Birney, *Letters*, II, 945; and Garrison, *Garrison*, I, 148.

²⁹ Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society to Mayor Cornelius Lawrence of New York, July 16, 1834, included in the microfilm printing of *Liberator*, between 1833 and 1834, reel 1.

³⁰ This entire argument appeared in a series of articles, signed "S. T. U.," which appeared in *Liberator*, Feb. 11, 18, 25, and Mar. 3, 1832. The quotations are from the first and last issues, respectively.

the importance of domestic order, and the performance of relative duties in families; of correct habits; command of temper and courteous manners. Also the duty and advantages of industry and economy; promptness and fidelity in the fulfillment of contracts or obligations, whether written or verbal; and encourage them in the acquisition of property, especially of real estate in fee simple, particularly dwellings for their own families. Present their duties and privileges as citizens, and encourage them to become voters, and to secure equal privileges with other citizens. . . .³¹

Others, varying little from the standard reforming attitudes of the day but less optimistic about raising the Negro to the middle class, urged him to adopt their own conception of lower-class standards. He should learn a trade and become a mechanic. Since these abolitionists categorized the social strata in such a way that the hardy mechanic always fell comfortably below the solid middle class, the Negro was bracketed, at worst, with the Irish hod carrier, and at best only identified with the honest toiler.³²

Sometimes in the abolitionists' arguments one discovers strong overtones of ordinary self-interest. The *Anti-Slavery Almanac* assured its readers, for example, that emancipated Negroes would not flock to the North. Let no one be perturbed, the *Almanac* urged in unctuous tone. "If the slaves are gradually set free, they must leave the place where they are, (and will be likely to go to the north,) that they may not interfere with the slavery which remains. But if they are all set free at once, they may continue where they are." Putting the argument in other terms, emancipated Negroes would be a great boon to the economy not only in the South but in the North as well.³³ "The southern laborers, when free and paid," C. C. Burleigh had said, "would buy of us many comforts and conveniences not allowed them now . . . which would give new activity

³¹ Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society to its agents, n.d. [1834-5?], included in the microfilm printing of *Liberator*, between 1833 and 1834, reel 1.

³² See, for example, the *Anti-Slavery Record*, I (June 1835), 68, urging that Negroes be apprenticed at good trades. And see also the commentary reprinted by *Liberator*, Mar. 31, 1837, from the Bangor *Mechanic*, in which it is made quite clear that the laborer is quite aware that the middle class looks down on the working class. See also, for comparisons with the Irish, Hildreth, *Archy Moore*, p. 264; Sarah Grimké to Elizabeth Pease [May 20? 1838], in *Weld-Grimké Letters*, II, 679; William Allen Diary, Nov. 10, 1863, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

³³ The *Anti-Slavery Almanac* (1837 and 1839). The quotation is from the earlier volume, p. 44. The self-interest showed in other ways as well. Defending what later became Radical Republican doctrine, Maria Weston Chapman wrote to Lizzy (Chapman) Laugel (Sept. 24, 1862) that "black soldiers would save our Armies, & black citizens our republican institutions." (Weston Papers). And Wendell Phillips also unconsciously suggested the same prior self-concern when he spoke at the *Liberator's* 20th anniversary celebration: "My friends, if we never free a slave, we have at least freed ourselves in the effort to emancipate our brother man." (Quoted in Garrison, *Garrison*, III, 320).

to our shops and mills and shipping, and steadier employment, and, most likely, higher wages, to all kinds of labor here." ³⁴ Thus emancipation would not inconvenience the North with a mass of freed slaves; it would rather prove quite profitable.

Still, there was the thorny issue of defining the social position of the Negro in a predominantly white society. Many of the same abolitionists who demanded so unfalteringly no association with slaveholders found it ticklishly difficult to espouse social intercourse with Negroes and almost impossible to champion holy wedlock with those of black skin. In theory and in conscience, of course, they deplored the bans on interracial marriage; yet in practice they as often betrayed an opposite sentiment.³⁵ For his own part, Garrison defended the ideal goal but reconciled it with practical reality. "At the present time," he said expediently, "mixed marriages would be in bad taste. . . ." ³⁶ Elizur Wright, however, scornfully ridiculed such temporizing over prejudice. "Pray, what is the matter? we ask of a generous and enlightened public," he snapped viciously.

The reply is couched with quaking apprehension, in the appalling interrogatory; *would you have your daughter marry a negro?* And the utter slavery to which this tyrant prejudice has reduced everything that is noble and good in the land, is evinced by nothing more clearly than by the pains taking of even abolitionists to show that colored men *may be* enfranchised and elevated without bringing on the dreaded consequence.³⁷

It seemed necessary, in the end, to plaster over the issue and to allay white fears. Mrs. Child, echoing the frequent antislavery assertion that there were scarcely enough abolitionists in the South to account for the evidences of miscegenation there, insisted that to say that abolitionists wished amalgamation was "a false charge, got up by the enemies of the cause, and used as a bugbear to increase the prejudices of the community." In fact, she added, "by universal emancipation we want to *stop* amalgamation."³⁸ More reassuring to those who hoped that the issues raised by social equality would fail to materialize was Samuel G. Howe's

³⁴ Burleigh, *Slavery and the North*, pp. 8-9.

³⁵ See Birney, *Letters*, I, 397; Garrison, *Garrison*, II, 356; *Anti-Slavery Record*, I (June 1835), 71; and Gilbert H. Barnes, *The Antislavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York, 1933), p. 274, note 20. See also Louis Ruchames, "Race, Marriage and Abolition in Massachusetts," *Journal of Negro History*, XL (1955), 250-73, on the fight for repeal of discriminatory marriage laws.

³⁶ *Liberator*, Aug. 13, 1831.

³⁷ [Elizur Wright Jr.], "Caste in the United States: A Review," *Quarterly Anti-Slavery Magazine*, II (Jan. 1837), 177.

³⁸ Lydia Maria Child, *Anti-Slavery Catechism* (Newburyport, 1836), pp. 31-32.

commentary made after a close study of Canadian Negroes. "Upon the whole," he observed,

. . . the experience of the Canadian refugees goes to show that there need be no anxiety upon the score of amalgamation of races in the United States. With freedom, and protection of their legal rights; with an open field for industry, and opportunities for mental and moral culture, colored people will not seek relationship with whites, but will follow their natural affinities, and marry among themselves.³⁹

The social distance decreed by class identification provided perhaps the most common and satisfactory framework for abolitionists' contacts with free Negroes. Thus, steeped in middle-class values and having identified the Negroes with the laboring classes, the antislavery band frequently assumed the patronizing air of the uplifter and the saved toward the downtrodden and unwashed. James G. Birney, speaking from a slaveholding background, observed that without question emancipation would, "where the superior intelligence of the master was acknowledged, produce on the part of the beneficiaries, the most entire and cordial reliance on his counsel and friendship."⁴⁰ And Sumner, in the Roberts Case, urged that "the vaunted superiority of the white race imposes corresponding duties. The faculties with which they are endowed, and the advantages they possess, must be exercised for the good of all. If the colored people are ignorant, degraded, and unhappy," he asserted with a fine sense of noblesse oblige, "then should they be especial objects of care."⁴¹

Such paternalism was, to be sure, most benign. At times, however, it was most insufferable. "The more I mingle with your people," Angelina Grimké wrote to Sarah Douglass in a display of tactlessness as gargantuan as it was overbearing,

the more I feel for their oppressions and desire to sympathize in their sorrows. Joshua Leavitt threw out a new and delightful idea on this subject on our way to Bloomfield. He said he believed the Lord had a great work for the colored people to do, and that your long continued afflictions and humiliations was the furnace in which He was purifying you from the dross[,] the tin[,] and the reprobate silver, that you might come out like gold seven times refined. I Hav[e] thought of this and fully believ[e] you will after all get up abov[e] us and be the favored instruments [to?] carry pure and undefiled Religion to the Heathen

³⁹ Howe, *Refugees from Slavery*, p. 83.

⁴⁰ Quoted in *The Legion of Liberty and Force of Truth, Containing the Thoughts, Words, and Deeds, of Some Prominent Apostles, Champions and Martyrs* (New York, 1843), n.p.

⁴¹ Sumner, "Equality before the Law," II, 376.

World. May the Lord lift you from the dung hill and set you among princes. . . .⁴²

Helping the Lord hoist the poor Negroes off the dung hill was, as it often turned out, an arduous and dangerous chore, but one which gave the abolitionists a chance many of them coveted to become martyrs in the cause. To defend the Negro in court, to speak on his behalf before hostile audiences, to be harried from town after town by the frenzied mob was the stuff of which martyrdom was made. And the genuine joy in the experience of such martyrdom only enhanced the rewards of protective guardianship, as those who braved the mob when Pennsylvania Hall was burned well knew. Confronting the hostile elements, the stalwart women of the Female Anti-Slavery Convention "maintain[ed] the perilled cause to the last." As they adjourned "the colored members of the convention were protected by their white sisters, and Oh! Shame to say," one of the white sisters wrote, "at both were thrown a shower of stones."⁴³ And then, Oh! Shame to say, the brand new hall was set ablaze and totally destroyed.

In their enthusiasm to elevate the Negro, the abolitionists frequently carried on their shoulders an early version of the White Man's Burden. They taught their children in heavily freighted moral tales that "negroes, even poor, degraded, despised slaves, are not without reason and understanding. [And that] many of them have a large share of sagacity." Go forth, they directed even the toddlers, instruct the poor and ignorant; become teachers, and help train the Negroes themselves to become missionaries that they may enlighten "their countrymen who are in ignorance and darkness."⁴⁴ The adults themselves set the initial example. When Helen Benson, daughter of Rhode Island abolitionist George Benson, was married to Garrison, she refused to allow cake at her wedding or to wear fancy clothes lest she be a poor model for the Negroes to follow.⁴⁵ Theodore Weld also cast himself as an exemplar of the good. "I attend Church with our colored friends," he wrote; "but," he honestly

⁴² In Angelina and Sarah Grimké to Sarah Douglass, Feb. 22, 1837, *Weld-Grimké Letters*, I, 364-65. Gerda Lerner contends that the Grimké sisters were almost if not totally above prejudice in "The Grimké Sisters and the Struggle against Race Prejudice," *Journal of Negro History*, XLVIII (1963), 277-91.

⁴³ Letter from a New York woman, May 18, 1838, in *Liberator*, May 25, 1838.

⁴⁴ From a story in the Juvenile Department, signed "H. Sabbath School Treasury," *Liberator*, Jan. 14, 1832. The Juvenile column was a regular feature in the early years of the *Liberator*. Henry C. Wright was designated American Anti-Slavery Society agent to children.

⁴⁵ Garrison, *Garrison*, I, 427.

admitted, "I do it to cast my lot with them; and," he contentedly concluded, "tho not spiritually edified, I find joy and peace in it."⁴⁶

It was, however, a far more difficult thing for the same abolitionists to follow through, unhesitatingly and courageously, the implications of their theories, to work unfalteringly and without equivocation, straight on to free the slave and obtain equality for the free Negro. Certainly the abolitionists were almost universally too forthright and too dedicated to be faithless to their ideals; certainly they did not knowingly forsake their plighted word. Still it was a constant fact of the antislavery crusade that it was clearly marked by the constant temporizing of its participants.⁴⁷ In Ohio, some Lane students objected when one of their number took up residence with Cincinnati Negro families while he was working among them because they thought it would be harmful to their project.⁴⁸ Throughout the North antislavery societies debated the questions "Ought abolitionists to encourage colored persons in joining Anti-Slavery Societies?" or "Is it expedient for Abolitionists to encourage social intercourse between white and colored families?" And their composite response was at best an equivocal "perhaps."⁴⁹ •

This political temporizing was not, of course, without its reasons, particularly in the light of mobs and physical violence provoked by extremists. Some abolitionists, of course, merely thought of public relations and how best to draw support to the cause. Birney, for his part, thought it enough to strive for equal civil rights without, at the same time, trying for social equality. Too much too soon, he argued, would mean a denial of all rights to the Negro.⁵⁰ So too the American Anti-Slavery Society, after the serious antiabolitionist riots in New York in 1834, rejected charges that they supported amalgamation or attacked the Constitution. "We disclaim, and entirely disapprove," they asserted, "the language of a hand-bill recently circulated in this City the tendency of which is thought to be to excite resistance to the Laws. Our principle is, that even hard laws are to be submitted to by all men, until they can by peaceable means be altered."⁵¹

⁴⁶ Weld to Sarah and Angelina Grimké, Dec. 15 [1837], in *Weld-Grimké Letters*, I, 496. A similar viewpoint turns up in Unitarian observations quite frequently as a rejection of emotional-evangelical enthusiasms.

⁴⁷ In a letter to Lewis Tappan, Weld, for example, wrote concerning a slave case in Connecticut that "not one of the Abolitionists here [in Hartford] was willing to appear openly in the matter as the friend of the compla[i]ntant. Brother Tyler and myself who are the only persons known publicly in the case as friends of the compla[i]ntant, have been and are still plentifully threatened with mob vengeance." June 8, 1837, *Weld-Grimké Letters*, I, 399.

⁴⁸ *Liberator*, Jan. 10, 1835.

⁴⁹ From Litwack, *North of Slavery*, p. 218.

⁵⁰ Birney to Weld, July 26, 1834, *Weld-Grimké Letters*, I, 163.

⁵¹ *Liberator*, July 19, 1834.

The abolitionists were painfully aware of their actions, yet in good conscience they believed that their course was the better part of wisdom and thus did not compromise their valor. Arthur Tappan for one was so fearful lest his earlier activities be misconstrued that he assured A. F. Stoddard of Glasgow in 1863 that "if . . . you should know of any one's charging me with any gross assault on the fastidiousness of the age, when I became the avowed friend of the colored man, you may set it down to the score of ignorance or malignant falsehood."⁵² But Sarah Forten, member of the actively antislavery Negro family of Philadelphia, understood. "How much of this leaven still lingers in the hearts of our white brethren and sisters is oftentimes made manifest to us," she wrote, referring specifically to an abolitionist who was comfortable with Negroes only under cover of night; "but when we recollect what great sacrifices to public sentiment they are called upon to make," she generously added, "we cannot wholly blame them."⁵³

Briefly, then, the antislavery movement was beset, throughout its history, by a fundamental ambivalence. Never could the abolitionists decide collectively, and infrequently individually, whether the Negro was equal or inferior to the white; whether social equality for the Negro should be stressed or whether it should be damped; whether civil and social rights should be granted him at once or only in the indefinite and provisional future; whether, in fact, social and civil rights should be granted or whether only civil rights should be given him. The abolitionists, furthermore, were torn between a genuine concern for the welfare and uplift of the Negro and a paternalism which was too often merely the patronizing of a superior class. And their forthright concern for the Negro was still more qualified by an unhappy degree of temporizing.

These are the hallmarks of a critical and fundamental ambivalence. When such a quandary existed over the position and treatment of the free Negro and over the very nature of the beings to be freed, abolitionist temporizing becomes understandable. When immediate emancipation as a plan of abolition was translated to mean only immediate repentance of the sin of slavery, the needs of the human beings who were slaves were ignored. The abolitionists had sought solace in abstractions about humanity. And their hesitancy and confusion about the question of race illuminate much of the contention and indecision within the antislavery movement—a movement baffled and torn by ambivalence.

⁵² Arthur Tappan to A. F. Stoddard, Aug. 27, 1863, in Tappan, *Tappan*, pp. 201-2.

⁵³ Sarah Forten to Angelina Grimké, Apr. 15, 1837, *Weld-Grimké Letters*, I, 380.

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The Dynamo and the Angelic Doctor: The Bias of Henry Adams' Medievalism

NOW THAT CRITICS HAVE GENERALLY AGREED TO REGARD HENRY ADAMS AS A man of letters rather than as a professionally committed academician, interpretation of his writing has got far beyond the mere location and description of his scholarly weaknesses.¹ And rightly so: his importance is unquestionably literary. Thus in discussing some of the eccentric methods and paradoxical conclusions of *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* my primary purpose is not to cavil with the ideas expressed there. Still less do I wish to defend the faith many feel to be maligned by Adams' "appreciation" of the Middle Ages; Catholic periodicals have long since registered more than adequate dismay at the portrait of the Virgin as Seat of Irrationality and Subverter of the Trinity.² Rather, and much more simply, I should like to examine Adams' very peculiar treatment of St. Thomas Aquinas as an index to the meaning of *Mont-Saint-Michel*, both in itself and as a phenomenon of American intellectual history.

¹ Robert Spiller's article on Henry Adams in *The Literary History of the United States* (1948) would seem to mark a turning point in Adams criticism. Virtually all the critical books on Adams have appeared since that date, and the authors, even when hostile to Adams, all seem aware of Spiller's view that Adams was not "a man of intellect" but "primarily a man of feeling" (II, 1096). Even with this new orientation, however, critics have rightly continued to try to get straight the facts of Henry Adams' works. The now completed three-volume biography by Ernest Samuels exists partly as a corrective to *The Education*. Other works useful in determining the "accuracy" of Adams' writing include William H. Jordy, *Henry Adams: Scientific Historian* (New Haven, 1952) and Henry Wasser, *The Scientific Thought of Henry Adams* (Thessaloniki, 1956).

² Two species of "Catholic reaction" to Adams the medievalist may be sampled in Hugh F. Blunt, "The Mal-Education of Henry Adams," *Catholic World*, CXLV (1937), 46-52 and Frances Quinlivan, "Irregularities of the Mental Mirror," *Catholic World*, CLXIII (1946), 58-65.

The distortions I find in *Mont-Saint-Michel* are not necessarily the equivalent or the immediate evidence of literary failure, but, as with most of Adams' other works, they must be grasped if one is to understand the nature of the work he is dealing with. One knows, for example, not to make the wrong sort of demands of *The Education of Henry Adams*: the large omissions and significant readjustments of personal detail are not consistent with the ordinary demands of autobiography. But as critics have repeatedly pointed out, and indeed as the book's two prefaces make abundantly clear, *The Education* ought not to be approached as conventional autobiography at all. Similarly, one's reaction to Adams' various essays in search of a theory of history will depend on whether one believes he is reading science or a poetic vision; it seems entirely possible that Adams was consciously using the most technical diagrams and formulae not as perverse science, as some have claimed, but as metaphors of apocalypse. Even the monumental *History* (though here the case is less clear) may have to be approached as a genre in itself: another example of the organic blending of German scientific history with American Puritan sermon does not come readily to mind. And one would be surprised if *Mont-Saint-Michel* proved a less complicated instance.

The problem of *Mont-Saint-Michel* can well be considered first in relation to that of *The Education*. The two are, as Adams tells us, companion pieces. But a careful comparison of the "Study in Thirteenth Century Unity" with the "Study in Twentieth Century Multiplicity" reveals an interesting paradox: the work which seems to be history turns out to be a good deal more personal than the one which seems to be autobiography. There is intimate self-revelation in *The Education*, to be sure, but it operates largely by nuance and implication. The third-person point of view, the omission of the intensely personal, and the pervasive tone of self-effacement are a function not only of polite reticence (Henry Adams is, as he remarks, no Jean-Jacques Rousseau) but also of the book's essential purpose. "The object of study is the garment, not the figure." The figure is, in the study of the "fit" of an education, a mere manikin; as a consequence, "The tailor adapts the manikin as well as the clothes to his patron's wants."³ This quotation displays, one might urge, a remarkably sophisticated notion of the way an autobiographer inevitably works, revealing not "himself," but always some particular version of himself, some dramatized construct or persona; beyond that it tells us that with Henry Adams the process of self-distortion was not altogether unconscious—he freely takes whatever liberties with his own mental and emotional life his theme and purpose require. Thus *The Education* turns out not to be primarily the autobiography of Adams at

³ "Preface" to *The Education of Henry Adams* (New York, 1918), p. x.

all; rather it is an exploration, with an instructive purpose, of the inadequacies of an eighteenth-century view of the twentieth-century world. Its theme is the simple inapplicability of any "education" based on the premise of fundamental unity in the world science was discovering. Its genre, if one feels the need to name it, is intellectual history.

Intellectual history, at the same time, is precisely what *Mont-Saint-Michel* seems at first to be and primarily is not. The disarmingly simple preface and the carefully maintained avuncular tone are not merely playful experiments in stylistics. Although they actually complicate rather than simplify the relation between the author and his historical material, the motive is not basically obscurantist. By choosing to contain his subject within the medium of the personal narrative, Adams clearly refused the ordinary limitations of intellectual or cultural history. His interest in the Middle Ages is, as he says, "not technical knowledge; not accurate information; not correct views on either history, art or religion," but only a "sense of what those centuries had to say."⁴

There is, as one might imagine, an element of apology in advance in Adams' disavowals of interest in technical accuracy. We know from other sources that he tried to be quite careful with the facts of *Mont-Saint-Michel*; he might take liberties with his manikin self, but reality outside the ego was obdurate and the Church was a stern judge. To the American layman of the nineteenth century, the subject of medieval philosophy and theology offered above all the opportunity to be ingloriously wrong—indeed one still feels the risk. Operating consciously as an outsider, Henry Adams knew that risk: if at one time he could waggishly assert that "the Virgin and St. Thomas [were his] vehicles of anarchism" but that "nobody knows enough to see what they mean," at another he could realize that publishing his private venture into the Middle Ages would present the possibility of serious embarrassment: "Although I have taken the precaution to secure the hesitating approval of certain learned Jesuit doctors, I have little trust in their permit to print. I care more for my theology than for my architecture, and should be much mortified if detected in an error about Thomas Aquinas, or the doctrine of universals."⁵

⁴ *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* (New York, 1913), p. 61. All further quotations from *Mont-Saint-Michel* will be identified in the text by page number in this edition.

⁵ *The Letters of Henry Adams*, ed. W. C. Ford (New York, 1938), II, 562-63. J. C. Levenson has noted Adams' concern to avoid the "charges of obscurantism and heterodoxy" which have in fact plagued his writing (see *The Mind and Art of Henry Adams* [Cambridge, 1957], pp. 235-88). Something of the complexity of Adams' attitude toward *Mont-Saint-Michel* can be gathered from his letter to H. O. Taylor of January 17, 1905 which stresses the "thesis" of twelfth-century unity as a measure of later disintegration, avows interest in accuracy of relation rather than of fact, and insists that the over-all intention is his own and his nieces' "amusement" (see H. D. Cater, *Henry Adams and His Friends* [Cambridge, 1957], pp. 558-60).

Adams' protestations, however, involve more than mere caution. Though he evidently wanted to get his metaphysical distinctions pat, they were not the term of his interest. In a larger sense he wished to discover what the Middle Ages had to say to the American Puritan-historian-scientist-skeptic of the twentieth century—principally about faith. Faith for Adams, as we see so clearly in *Esther*, always remained a completely personal and somewhat irrational fact: one had it or not; it could not be reasoned or wished into being. It is this element of search for the personally satisfying, for a faith which transcends fact, which gives everything in *Mont-Saint-Michel* its particular shape. Others might find in the great body of medieval fact what they wished; Adams too would be interested only in what interested him.

Evidently St. Thomas Aquinas interested him greatly. Even though the vast majority of readers remember Adams' sense of the Virgin and of the poems and cathedrals she inspired far more vividly than his (comparatively) technical treatment of Aquinas; and even though Adams is clearly more cordial to the simple piety of St. Francis than to the complicated intellectuality of St. Thomas, the fact remains that the climactic last chapter, in many ways the most important in the book, is devoted solely to the Angelic Doctor. To Henry Adams the chapter seemed the only thing he ever wrote which he could "almost think good." Most critics, however, give the chapter on St. Thomas as little notice as possible. Thomistic metaphysics is, after all, a fairly arcane subject. And to complicate the problem, Adams insisted on treating St. Thomas as an artist, an architect who built the Church Intellectual as others were building the Church Architectural. It is, he repeatedly insists, only the structure of Aquinas' thought which interests him.⁶

Adams could scarcely imagine that the massive Thomistic system of distinctions and qualifications had, as philosophy, anything to say to the modern mind. He evidently felt, at one level, a kind of sympathy with Aquinas as another human being who had failed in the attempt to establish the coherence of the universe on a rational basis, and he once declared that his own "weakness for science mixed with metaphysics" revealed a

⁶ Despite Adams' insistence on a formal approach only, Levenson has argued that Adams' judgments on St. Thomas significantly anticipate those of Etienne Gilson (*Mind and Art*, p. 284); a somewhat less judicious critic has judged that although Adams found "Thomas' cool scientific brain too modern," he did "full justice" to his "masterful synthesis of thought" (Elizabeth Stevenson, *Henry Adams: A Biography* [1955], p. 323). Recently, however, J. P. McIntyre, S. J. has asserted the more credible view that Adams' "Thomistic cathedral" is an "imaginative construct rather than an historical or philosophical accuracy" ("Henry Adams and the Unity of Chartres," *Twentieth Century Literature*, VII, 1962, 170).

nature diluted equally from Lord Kelvin and St. Thomas; but the letters make it clear that Adams could never take Thomistic metaphysics seriously: "All day long I read metaphysics, and study St. Thomas Aquinas. It is as amusing as *Punch* and about as sensible. St. Thomas is frankly droll, but I think I like his ideas better than those of Descartes or Leibnitz

or Kant or the Scotchmen, just as I like better a child of ten that tells lies, to a young man of twenty who not only lies but cheats knowingly. St. Thomas was afraid of being whipped. Descartes and the rest lied for pay."⁷ St. Thomas might be preferable to most modern metaphysicians, but only because more naively honest. Naivete is, after all, a personal rather than a philosophical virtue and Adams, despite what seem explicit statements of "appreciation," is quick to notice what seem to him lapses of logic.

Adams, then, whatever his position relative to the Church was to become, was in no danger of becoming a convert to the "droll" doctrines of St. Thomas. They could interest him only as structure. The architectural analogy in fact determined what parts of the system were to be considered in *Mont-Saint-Michel*: "The foundation—the structure—the congregation—are enough for students of art; his ideas of law, ethics, and politics; his vocabulary, his syllogisms, his arrangement are, like the drawings of Villard de Honnecourt's sketch-book, curious but not vital" (351). One result of this approach is that Adams discusses less than one-fifth of the entire *Summa Theologiae*; in failing to discuss the Thomistic theories of ethics and politics (which do not depend so directly on the Aristotelian concepts of act and potency as does his metaphysics), Adams neglects what seems to many modern thinkers the most vital and relevant part of the system, the theory of natural law. But this is not the real issue. What must be grasped is Adams' sense of the curious or naive quality of Thomas' thought. One understands it and is beyond it. The irrelevance of Thomism as *philosophy* is a presupposition whose validity the book does not propose to defend or prove. Adams takes for granted his reader's ready agreement that "metaphysics were a medieval absurdity."

Only in this light can Adams' seemingly contradictory statements about his interest in "correct views" be understood. It is not exactly that he was trying to have it both ways. In his more or less scholarly investigation of the Middle Ages—outside the dramatized world of *Mont-Saint-Michel*—he was no doubt quite concerned to read St. Thomas accurately and judge him fairly, but the close reading and judicious estimation are not part of his book. The first reaction of the critic favorably disposed to St. Thomas—that Henry Adams lacked seriousness or was guilty of bad

⁷ *Letters*, II, 295.

faith—is not entirely just. Obviously one must look elsewhere for a scholarly interpretation of Thomism, but it was never Adams' intention to provide one. He furnishes only the ironic reflections of one who, wishes aside, knows all along that St. Thomas is not true, but who can still respond aesthetically to the formal arrangement of parts.

But Adams' personal approach presents other difficulties. It is mainly art which *Mont-Saint-Michel* prefers to metaphysics but it also, in a curious way, prefers science. Despite his insistence on a formal approach, Adams found it necessary to give some account of the positions Aquinas actually held, for in the architectural analogy ideas and propositions were the structural components: the foundation, the walls, even the congregation had to be built out of metaphysical speculation. Rarely, however, does Adams render Thomas' Latin phrases into the traditional equivalents of English philosophical vocabulary. Instead he regularly substitutes the "scientific equivalent."

Thus something very queer happens to Thomas' first argument for the existence of God: " 'I see motion,' said St. Thomas; 'I infer a motor.' " This sounds simple enough, but it is not precisely what St. Thomas said. At the risk of seeming pedantic one may point out that Thomas' Latin for that which does the moving is *movens*; it has always been translated *mover* rather than *motor*. Certainly *mover* sounds a bit silly to the modern ear, as if God were some sort of Supreme Freight Agent, but there is, within the world of metaphysical hair-splitting, an excellent reason for preferring it. *Movens* is, in form, a verbal noun; as such it points first of all to activity; it describes a being as an agent rather than as a nature. Thus *mover*, in the accepted philosophical jargon, signifies any being which acts in any way whatever to produce motion (change) of any sort whatever. *Motor*, on the other hand, with its unmistakable materialist and mechanist suggestions, is clearly inappropriate to Thomas' notion of God as Pure Spiritual Act. One suspects that not even Aristotle, who has been accused of offering a so-called "physical proof," of a God who does not at all transcend the material world, could be accused of dealing in "motors."⁸

Reasons for this substitution of one jargon for another—and it continues throughout the entire chapter—are not far to seek. One's first

⁸ For an introductory account of the metaphysics of Aristotle which considers the question of its "naturalism," see Fredrick Copelston, S. J., *A History of Philosophy* (London, 1953), Vol. I, Pt. II, chap. xxix. A brief, intelligible (and classic) statement about Aquinas' "use" of the metaphysics of Aristotle is contained in Etienne Gilson's chapter on "Thomas Aquinas" in his *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1955); see esp. pp. 381-83.

impulse is to suggest that Adams (despite his apparent reliance on authoritative commentaries) did not understand all the nuances of Thomistic vocabulary; the deceptively simple Church Latin, which seems to handle an Arabianized Aristotle as easily as its own Augustine, is often only a code or formula for an intensely complicated philosophical position. Closer to the truth, perhaps, one might observe that, despite the surface similarities Adams seemed to find between himself and St. Thomas, no two men ever thought less alike. Adams, the seeker of unity, sought always to simplify his conception of the universe (he got it down, eventually, to the single concept of force). St. Thomas on the other hand, trusting in the existence of Transcendental Unity (though as Adams observes his philosophy did not begin by assuming it), never hesitated to multiply distinctions when necessary.⁹ St. Thomas is ineradicably a dualist, Adams a monist.

But the real reason for the substitution is much more simple—and much more conscious and intentional. Adams loves the dramatic: to answer Thomas' pseudo-proof about motors he creates an "average mechanic," and it is, finally, for the sake of the dramatic confrontation between the metaphysician and the mechanic that Adams poses the Thomistic argument as he does.¹⁰ The game is being played, as it were, in the scientist's home park. "I see motion," the mechanic admits, but "I infer energy. I see motion everywhere; I infer energy everywhere" (352). St. Thomas, as Adams creates the dialogue, responds with his classic denial of the possibility of an infinite series of "motors" and consequent inference of a Prime Motor. The mechanic's reply is pragmatic and positivist: "No doubt . . . we can conduct our works as well on that as on any other theory, or as we could on no theory at all; but, if you offer it as proof, we can only say that we have not yet reduced all motion to one source or all energies to one law, much less to one act of creation, although we have tried our best" (353). Adams clearly knows what he is doing here. In the first place he has chosen "the argument from motion" out of St. Thomas' five proofs for the existence of God not because it has any greater claim to validity or centrality than the others, but because the "first way" seems, deceptively, the most scientific and therefore lends itself most readily to a "scientific" discussion. It would be very difficult

⁹ Adams is quite right in stressing Aquinas' insistence on the empirical starting point of philosophy. The so-called "ontological argument" of St. Anselm (similar to the proof offered later by Descartes), which begins the proof of God's existence with the *idea* of God in our minds, is not one of Thomas' "five ways."

¹⁰ Adams might well have been describing his handling of St. Thomas and the mechanic when he wrote, in a letter to Margaret Chanler of September 9, 1909 that "I like metaphysics and I like physics,—but I don't much care to reconcile them, though I enjoy making them fight" (*Letters*, II, 524).

to do this same sort of thing with the third way, from contingency, or with the fourth, from degrees of perfection.¹¹

The earlier debate between Abelard and William of Champeau displays the same freedom with texts for the sake of irony—as William turns Abelard's nominalism into pantheism, accusing the young logician of holding a "doctrine of the Real Presence peculiar to [himself]" (301). In this exchange over the problem of universals, Adams obviously enjoys reducing both sides to absurdity; his point is the insolubility of the problem of the one and the many in any rational way. The debate between St. Thomas and the mechanic is neither so long nor so lively as this earlier encounter, but the outcome is roughly the same. Although Thomas' assertion of unity is attractive as hypothesis, as proof it is absurd; the mechanic can save himself from similar absurdity only by denying that theories matter and refusing to have any at all; and this attitude—"we can carry on our work with no theory"—seems to Adams to involve its own brand of absurdity. Man's mind, at any rate, is no closer to unity than it ever was. It is left with the choice between the ludicrous (and in this age dishonest) mental gymnastics of metaphysics and the passive acceptance of multiplicity. Thus Adams' famous pessimism.

The remainder of the exposition of Aquinas reveals similar distortions. The Thomistic theory that since only God is a necessary being, "every other being that is in any way is from God"—which admittedly reduces the importance of secondary causation—seems to the radical simplifier of forces to mean that there are in the world "only two forces, God and Man" (356). The same spirit leads Adams to accept a hostile interpretation of Thomas' doctrine of individuation by matter; Aquinas, one supposes, would scarcely allow his position to be paraphrased to say that "the soul is a fluid absorbed by matter in proportion to the absorptive power of the matter" (361). And the question of free will, for Thomas a matter both of introspection and of proof from the principle that only limited goods are presented to a will whose object is All Good, becomes a problem of preserving man as independent energy. Despite Adams' assurance that "one follows it most easily by translating his school vocabulary into modern technical terms," the reader is fairly sure he is not getting pure St. Thomas when "reflection" (the power of the human intellect to observe its own operations even as it operates) is compared to the action of the facets of a lighthouse lantern.

¹¹ Thomas begins with the argument from motion because it is, he feels, "manifestior"—change being a fact more evident than causality or contingency or even orderly governance. The logic of the third way is, however, basic to all the five ways and has been consistently found to be the most cogent of his various arguments.

All this is not to say that *Mont-Saint-Michel* simply exalts science and degrades metaphysics. Rather, it assumes a continuity between them and tries to show their common failure. Translate Aquinas into the terms we now use to talk about such problems, Adams says, and you will see that we are still in the same trouble. Thus a second source of interest

- in Thomas Aquinas: not only did his artistry seem comparable with the architecture of the medieval period, but his thought seemed to suggest continuities with the modern. One should not be surprised, then, to find Aquinas the key to a theory of history.

At this point it seems safe to suggest that if one continues to regard *Mont-Saint-Michel* and *Chartres* primarily as history, he is forced to admit that very serious, perhaps vitiating, defects appear. Almost certainly Adams has got too far too fast. Accurately presented, St. Thomas and the average mechanic (even in the sense Adams uses the appellation) have very little to say to one another. Thomistic metaphysics, if it is anything at all, is certainly not mechanics; and a mere glance at the "first way" reveals that, however baffling or absurd it may appear to us, it is not the "fifty thousand year old reasoning" Adams represented it to be: "Whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion unless it is in potency to that towards which it is in motion. But a thing moves in so far as it is in act. For motion is nothing other than the reduction of something from potency to act. But nothing can be reduced from potency to act except by something in act. . ." ¹² And so on. Such an argument may not indeed yield the Christian God but it will scarcely yield a motor.

In a curious way, one might suggest the scientizing of St. Thomas merely repeats the technique of Adams' treatment of the Virgin. More important than her role as pagan goddess (in *The Education* her proper analogues become Venus and Isis) is the fact that she is felt completely as force. Just as Thomistic metaphysics seem intelligible to Adams only as mechanics, so he can understand the Virgin only as a capacity to get work done. One is quite willing to grant all that he says about Mariolatry; no doubt an instinct of self-preservation does lie behind the great cathedrals, and very probably the Virgin Mary did (and does) offer a court of nonrational appeal from the inexorable justice of the Trinity. But one feels, nevertheless, that something is surely lost when love is treated as a problem of dynamics. Much of the delicacy of medieval religion will no doubt evade the tracker of force, like much of the pinpoint subtlety of St. Thomas. The single concept of force, one may feel, is equally inade-

¹² *Summa Theologiae*, I, ii, 3.

quate to deal with piety and with metaphysics. And so one approaches the historical thesis of *Mont-Saint-Michel* cautiously, strongly suspecting that the dynamic theory of history will not do, but curious to know what part artist-scientist Aquinas plays in that theory.

It is a commonplace to re-quote the conclusion of Chapter XXIX of *The Education* to point out that the century 1150-1250 represented for Adams, at least at one stage of his thinking, "the point of history when man held the highest idea of himself as a unit in a unified universe" and that those years served as "the unit from which he might measure motion down to his own time." In the light of this quotation one is tempted simply to say that "Henry Adams saw modern history as the progress from unified understanding, or the illusion of it, towards dispersion of understanding and force."¹³ In this view *Mont-Saint-Michel* is the record of unity, *The Education* of multiplicity; together they are studies in polarities of historical reality and human experience. And in a most general sense this is the relation between the books. But one must also recognize that *Mont-Saint-Michel* is not static: it is a moving picture rather than a tableau; it is itself a picture of decline. Without a clear sense of this ironic countertheme of disillusion and decline one is not likely to grasp the real significance which Aquinas had for Henry Adams.

One critic has recently suggested that the entire structure of *Mont-Saint-Michel* is to be understood as a "stepping down," from the first page ("The Archangel loved heights") to the last ("the pathos of its self-distrust and anguish of doubt is buried in the earth as its last secret").¹⁴ A plausible case can be made for this view if one is thinking of Adams' theory of history as one of continuous degradation. This is the meaning, clearly, of Adams' use of the law of entropy in *A Letter to American Teachers of History*, and it certainly has claim to be regarded as his final one. But entropy is only one of several scientific ways Adams used to talk about his apocalyptic sense of history. *The Rule of Phase Applied to History*, which stands closer in time to *Mont-Saint-Michel*, expresses a quite different view. *The Rule* offers, among other things, a diagram of the parabolic path of a comet to suggest that historical development reached a peak of progress and then turned retrograde. And this is precisely the theory which will most satisfactorily explain the structure of *Mont-Saint-Michel*.

¹³ Yvor Winters, "Henry Adams: or the Creation of Confusion," *In Defense of Reason* (Denver, 1947), p. 374. I disagree with much of what Winters says in his famous essay on Adams' "fideicism," but I am also, obviously, much in his debt in the following analysis.

¹⁴ This is the view advanced by John P. McIntyre, S. J. ("The Unity of Chartres"). Fr. McIntyre also attempts to show that *Mont-Saint-Michel* follows the method of scientific history outlined by Adams elsewhere.

As Robert Spiller has analyzed that structure, it consists of a preparation for the great unification just before disintegration, the actual achievement of unity in terms of emotion and faith, and the attempted translation of that unity into the rational terms of scholastic philosophy.¹⁵ Such a view, implying as it does a rising and falling structure, is required to explain two key facts: first that the Virgin of Chartres, who occupies the long *middle* portion of the book, is, for Adams, clearly the source of the highest unity; and second, that by the time of the death of St. Thomas, twenty-four years beyond the term of the ideal 1150-1250 century, a precipitous decline is already sadly in evidence.

At the outset, in the eleventh century, the tone is exuberant. Masculine energy is high and seems to be increasing. "The Archangel stands for Church and State, and both militant. He is the conqueror of Satan, the mightiest of all created spirits, the nearest to God" (1). But though society is indeed a unified whole, something is lacking to its ultimate perfection, the presence of the female principle. The twelfth-century worship of the Virgin, a cognate of the ideal of romantic love, provides the missing element in full measure. Masculine energy is everywhere made to serve the feminine, and this is the highest point of human development: the male and female principles are both present, but hierarchically ordered (one has only to read Adams' novels to be reassured that the female is indeed higher). The trouble begins when masculine energy again asserts itself, this time as logic.

Both the military energy that built the abbey of St. Michael, and the more complex feminine energy that built cathedrals to the Virgin, are nonlogical. Logic, Adams would come to hold, is a form of paralysis; mind is merely a degraded form of instinct or will.¹⁶ The curve of civilization turns back the moment scholasticism (the attempt to provide a rational basis for the unified sensibility which already existed in fact and faith and action) becomes the dominant cultural force. Thus after the long chapter on "Les Miracles de Notre Dame," which exalts the Virgin's perverse irrationality as a unifying power greater than the Trinity ever was, Adams turns to the frustrating technical debate between Abelard and William over the problem of universals. The connection is never drawn out in any perfectly explicit way, but the emotional contrast between the two chapters makes the point sufficiently clear: unity, while it existed, was prerational; it simply was. Action, will, faith, these are all unifying principles; logic is divisive. As long as men could simply

¹⁵ *Literary History of the United States*, p. 1101.

¹⁶ This idea pervades the writing of Henry Adams. Its fullest expression, perhaps, is in *A Letter to American Teachers of History*, printed by Brooks Adams in *The Degradation of the Democratic Dogma* (New York, 1919); see esp. pp. 192-95.

believe; and believing, love; and loving, act out the simple tasks of worship, all was well. The minute they began to reason on the basis for their believing, the journey to multiplicity had begun.

In the next-to-last chapter, on "The Mystics," Adams had reported the reaction many medieval minds felt against the corrosive logic of Abelard—and with considerable sympathy. He essentially agrees with St. Bernard and the Council of Sens that the effort "to reach God by reason . . . was futile and likely to be mischievous" (320). The mystics of the school of St. Victor took it as given that religion is a matter of love, not logic; and that since reason depends on the senses and God is not an object of sensation, He could be known only "directly; by emotion; by ecstasy; by absorption of our existence in His; by substitution of His spirit for ours" (325). Aside from this quasi-theological reaction to the beginnings of scholasticism, and beyond it in the direction of simple piety, there is yet St. Francis, the highest example of pure and confident Christianity. To him, "Satan was logic." Whereas the mysticism of the French showed an ineffaceable "sense of measure, of logic, of science," St. Francis, essentially illogical like the Virgin, showed the childlike (and saintly) ability to "believe two contrary things at the same time" (341). For him the simple faith that all creatures were brothers, and hence that love sufficed, was enough.

As Adams moves from the mysticisms of the sympathetic St. Bernard and of the positively captivating St. Francis (which slowed but did not halt the rise of rationalism) to the fierce intellectuality of St. Thomas, he forgives the Angelic Doctor in advance for what is about to be consummated: "No one was to blame—no one ever is to blame—because God wanted contradictory things, and man tried to carry out, as he saw them, God's trusts. The schoolmen saw their duty in one direction; Francis saw his in another. . . . The Church, embracing all mankind, had no choice but to march with caution, seeking God by every possible means of intellect and study. Francis, acting only for himself, could throw caution aside and trust implicitly in God, like the children who went on crusade" (343-44). Adams suggests that one must decide for one's self, according to one's personal standards, whether the solution of St. Francis or that of St. Thomas is the more sympathetic, but his own standards are clear. They are the standards of the "Conservative Christian Anarchist"; they are all on the side of the uncautious private faith and opposed to public doctrine which reason had to support for the protection of all mankind.

"Religious minds," Adams tells us, "prefer skepticism. The true saint is a profound skeptic; a total disbeliever in human reason, who has more than once joined hands on this ground with some who were at best

sinners" (322). Skepticism could be a very important support of the religious attitude because the attempt at proof only opened the way to denial. Thus for Adams it was in the skepticism of the mystics, a "bankruptcy of . . . science," that the "Western Christian seemed actually on the point of attainment; he . . . touched God behind the veil of skepticism" (325). If one doubts the general conclusion drawn from the single instance, Adams can point to the seventeenth century and show the battle between rationalist and fideist being joined again: to Descartes' conceptual or logical proof of the existence of God, Pascal, "the finest religious mind of the time," answered that "it was not God he doubted, but logic" (323).¹⁷

For Adams, in plain fact, Aquinas is not one of the finest religious minds. Canonized for his "decisions" rather than for personal sanctity, he seemed more interested in buttressing the dogmatic foundations of Church and State than in the salvation of souls. "Granted a Church," that is, granted a formal, visible, hierarchical, ecclesiastical organization, "Saint Thomas' Church was the most expressive that man has made" (383); but Churches do not of themselves, as the lesson of Boston Unitarianism taught Henry Adams, guarantee the survival of the religious instinct. The *Summa Theologiae* is at once a monument to the highest reaches of reason and the beginning of the long decline from faith to science. Earlier scholasticism, which stood closer to the spirit of the Virgin than to that of the Dynamo, had expressed an "equilibrium between the love of God—which is faith—and the logic of God—which is reason; between the round arch and the pointed" (321). With the fiercely aspiring arches of Thomas' rationalistic cathedral, "scholastic science" reached an "extreme" that was "excessively modern, scientific, and technical." There is, to be sure, something impressive about the achievement, but the sequel is not happy: "From that time, the universe has steadily become more complex and less reducible to a central control" (380).

Having treated Aquinas as intellectual architect (and been impressed by the boldness of his structure), and having translated his arguments into scientific language (and been struck by their modernity), Adams discovers in the end that his Aquinas is really the father of modern scientific rationalism. His tone is not accusing: though Thomas extended his systematic investigation of the universe far beyond that of any of his medieval predecessors, he was pressing in a direction man seemed destined

¹⁷ An excellent discussion of the tradition of religious skepticism, or "fideism," is Louis I. Bredvold, *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1934). Bredvold's treatment of Pascal (pp. 35-40) is especially interesting and throws considerable light on the interest he had for Adams; the whole of chap. iii, "The Crisis of the New Science," which describes the immediate intellectual climate of Dryden's day, may be read for suggestive comparisons with Adams' situation and reactions.

to travel, and, given "the irregularities of the mental mirror," his failure and those which followed were inevitable. Nevertheless, Aquinas—who no doubt thought of himself first as a Christian, next as a theologian, and only as a philosopher because it helped one's theology to be one—seems to Adams the legitimate parent of that corrosive empirical spirit which has meant the end of the unity of faith.

It would not be difficult to dispute Adams' view of St. Thomas. One could easily show, from his discussion of Aquinas' remarks on the Trinity, that Adams is far less scrupulous than Aquinas was in distinguishing faith, theology and philosophy; that once the proper distinctions about the relative importance of reason and revelation are made, Aquinas seems far less rationalistic than even many of his contemporaries, than Anselm, for example, who sat down one day to prove the *logical necessity* of the Trinity.¹⁸ It would not be difficult to prove, in short, that the "Christian philosophy" of the *Summa Theologiae* is far less a logical tour de force than Adams makes it seem.

But again this does not seem the main issue. What is to be grasped, I think, is that the reason for the distortion is the clear operation, in a very personal book, of a very personal bias. When Adams admonishes his nieces never to forget that "Faith alone supports [the Thomistic cathedral], and that, if Faith fails, Heaven is lost" (383), he is asserting the cardinal principle of his own philosophy. Whatever may be the *real* relation of reason and faith in Thomas Aquinas, their relation in Henry Adams is clear: reason inevitably destroys faith. And thus the theology of St. Thomas seems the dangerous (if inevitable) exposure of the foregone conclusions of faith to the naive, after-the-fact rationalizations and wish-fulfillments of mind. Such "reasonings" might be built into an impressive structure—and thus reflect a vision or a feeling of Unity—but they could never prove it. And far from guaranteeing the continued existence of faith by justifying its reasonableness, they only opened true faith, the loving acceptance of mystery, to a number of objections which the universe and reason could not cooperate to solve.

It would certainly be stretching a point to call *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* a confession of faith, and no one, I dare say, will ever try to make the conventional "neo-orthodox" case for Henry Adams. For him, the Christian faith had failed and heaven was lost. But the book is a

¹⁸ The first question of the *Summa* is devoted to the problem of faith and philosophy. The best account of Aquinas' position relative to those of his contemporaries is Etienne Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1938); and for an account of the "meaning" of Thomism in the history of philosophy almost opposite to that which Adams suggests, see Gilson's *Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York, 1937), esp. pp. 3-121.

religious document nevertheless, a sort of *Religio Skeptici* if you will. It professes no recognizable faith to have saving efficacy for Henry Adams, but it does profess, in a meaningful way, faith in the efficacy of faith. If man is to possess a unified and satisfying sense of reality, Adams seems subversively to say, and if man's art is again to reflect a wholeness of vision, then faith is necessary. Adams will not make what seems to him the old mistake of getting up arguments to "prove" inherited dogmas; neither will he regard the will to believe as wholly free, as if faith were simply there for the wishing. Adams' position is, ironically, that of the fideist without faith—faith alone saves if only one had it; and *Mont-Saint-Michel* is Adams' fullest statement of this "religious" position. In his view Thomistic philosophy represents more than a crisis in the history of mind: it is the very apotheosis of a religious attitude which Adams opposes. St. Thomas seems to Adams to have faith and to wish reason also. But Adams' world is older, and he would gladly exchange whatever scraps of reason he has for any genuine faith.

It is, I think, easy to ridicule Adams' position. The Christian may well think it inadequate and he will probably regret the decline of that fundamental trust in the reasonableness of the Creation which made possible not only scholastic philosophy but, as A. N. Whitehead has noted, science as well. The non-Christian humanist may equally regret the irrational survival of religious attachments after all basis for them has crumbled; he may even wonder why one cannot appreciate the art of the past without sentimentalizing the conditions which produced it. Few modern readers, in short, will be able to accept any of the various "faiths" Adams tries out—any more than Adams finally did himself. The peculiar version of Mariolatry Adams cultivates in *Mont-Saint-Michel*, its generalized form in *The Education*, the dynamo worship of that same book and the religious awe in the face of the spectacle of Niagara in *Esther* are all varieties of a fairly recognizable post-Darwinian worship of Nature as Force and are not likely to win many converts in the mid-twentieth century. But the literary success of the books in which these faiths appear depends not on our impulse to worship the specific symbol in question, but only on our recognition of Adams' picture of a world in which, to fill a power vacuum, *something* is always demanding worship. And to this extent most of us are sympathetic: the lack of faith and the enduring need for it seem, ineffaceably, the conditions of modern life.

This much, perhaps, is commonplace. Obviously it is only a short distance from Henry Adams, wandering worshipful but unable to worship in the Virgin's cathedrals, to Hemingway's Jake Barnes, lamenting his ineffectual appreciation of "the grand old religion." But if the anti-rationalism of Henry Adams has well known descendants, it has also

many ancestors and contemporaries who are not generally recognized as such. I refer to such divers figures in American literature as Edwards, Emerson, Hawthorne and William James. It will not do, of course, to overlook all the obvious differences among these various writers; but there is an important strand of connection. They all urge the transcendent value of "the heart," considered as the source of belief, love and moral will.

Jonathan Edwards, though he shunned no effort of intellect in the process, was at constant pains to show that true religion was a matter of "the affections," which he did not distinguish from will or feelings. The eighteenth-century religion of reason tempted Edwards very little. Still less did it tempt Hawthorne whose constant theme is faith and involvement in humanity as against the impersonality of abstract analysis. Melville shares this theme, and it bears real relations to Henry James' concern for the habitual rightness of the moral disposition. Even Emerson begins and ends his career as an opponent of rationalistic encroachments on the religious sensibility. His idealism is clearly a will to believe rather than a technically formulated metaphysical position—and one needs to read no further than *Nature* to find this out: the "advantage of the ideal theory over the popular faith," he tells us, is that "it presents the world in precisely that view which is most *desirable to the mind*." And with William James the primacy of man's voluntary or passional nature is once more given explicit philosophical justification. Only the most careless reader of William James' pragmatic philosophy can fail to grasp that its basic motive is religious: he presents his "will to believe" as a justification of faith even where the intellect is not coerced by evidence, and the ground of his justification is the importance in human existence of everything that is not intellect.

It seems only a slight exaggeration to say that fideism, the demand for faith without or even in spite of reason, is *the* American philosophy, so impressive is the list of its exponents. As Puritanism—America's one effective faith—declined, the voices urging the absolute primacy of faith became more and more urgent.¹⁹ *Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres* is certainly an important moment in this phase of American intellectual history.

¹⁹ Yvor Winters is wrong, I believe, in describing American fideism as an inheritance from the doctrines of Puritanism. Perry Miller has clearly shown that the Puritans figure as seventeenth-century scholastic rationalists (see *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* [Cambridge, 1939], pp. 64-108, 181-206); and less academically, though no less accurately, Hawthorne long ago noticed the degree to which the seventeenth-century Puritans developed "head" at the expense of "heart." The connection, if any, is no doubt to be sought by way of reaction: when intellectual activity so intense results in conclusions so monstrous, reason is likely to be distrusted for a long time.

Though it violates chronology to do so, one probably ought to regard *Mont-Saint-Michel* as the reflex of *The Education*, rather than the other way around. *Mont-Saint-Michel* is, of course, the earlier of the two books, but certainly much of the vision of multiversity and chaos which inspired *The Education* was quite clear to Adams when he began his medieval excursion. In a sense he found in the Middle Ages, in the Virgin and in St. Francis, what he wanted to find; the unity of the century 1150-1250 is largely the projection of all that his own century was not. St. Thomas became what he became because, in Adams' view, his type was all too familiar. He seemed the sort of mind which, lacking the private religious impulse of a St. Francis or a Pascal, would, when formal dogma inevitably fell away, become the "modern scientist."

One must read *Mont-Saint-Michel* as a commentary, then, not on the medieval but on the modern situation. Its controlling bias is distinctively modern and peculiarly American. It is truly a companion to *The Education*, but not because it accurately depicts an age which genuinely possessed all that the nineteenth century lacked. It does not do that. And doubtlessly the Middle Ages were no more unified before St. Thomas than after; one certainly finds early medieval philosophy and theology a tangle of argument and contradiction. Whereas *The Education* describes the reality of post-Darwinian confusion, *Mont-Saint-Michel* actively posits the necessity of faith as a stay against chaos—even as it purports to represent, in the thought of Thomas Aquinas, the inevitable beginning of that chaos.



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An Approach to Robert Frost's Nature Poetry

THE READER OF ROBERT FROST'S NATURE LYRICS, SEEKING FOR THEIR DEFINING qualities, will probably think first of the speaker's unmistakable voice, next of the recurrent rural setting. Most discussions of the lyrics have centered on these aspects. But the speaker has been too quickly assimilated into the tradition of the cracker barrel philosopher, merely because he is colloquial and nonallusive. The setting, simply because it is rural, has often been too facilely assumed to prove that Frost is an antimodern. Instead of examining the poetic landscape in detail, critics have talked about the real New England and Frost's retreat to it. They have labeled Frost a "nature poet" and then assumed that he was a version of Emerson or Wordsworth—as though there were only one way to be a nature poet. In the 1930s, when critical approaches to Frost were developing, this nature poet was rejected by the social critics for being hopelessly old-fashioned, scolded by the humanists for an evasive pantheism and ignored by the new critics because his poems lacked (or seemingly lacked) ironic cross-currents, dissolving potential tension in easy humor. Frost's defenders have too often accepted the premises of the attacks—that all nature poetry is of a kind, that a colloquial voice cannot carry tension—and thereby served mainly to perpetuate the picture of Frost as a sort of inspired plowman.¹

In the last decade, close-reading techniques have been applied to Frost's poetry with exciting and valuable results, but few interpreters have escaped entirely the pervasive conviction that to use nature is to use it

¹ Robert Frost: *A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. James M. Cox (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1962) contains examples of all these trends. All three lines of attack have merged recently in the by-now-commonplace assertion that Frost, for purposes of control, restricts his universe so tightly as to make its resolutions inapplicable to our world. E.g., George W. Nitchie, *Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost* (Durham, N. C., 1960); Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Continuity of American Poetry* (Princeton, 1961), pp. 274-83.

in Emersonian or Wordsworthian fashion. If it is assumed that the use of nature imagery is necessarily tied to some transcendental doctrine about the correspondence of natural objects to states or laws of mind then of course the transcendental ethic and aesthetic follow, but in a completely circular way. Outer facts *must* be used to represent inner meanings, and the poet *must* celebrate and search for the moment where the barrier between outer and inner disappears. Phrases such as "outer and inner weather" and "a boundless moment" may be culled from Frost's poetry to support this romantic metaphysic, but only through ignoring the context in which such phrases appear, the actual details of the rural setting as well as the action which takes place in that setting.²

Similarly, it is too easily assumed that Frost's use of seasonal imagery necessarily implies a rebirth theme. The very critic who has calculated the impressive proportion of fall and winter poetry in the canon, as compared with the scarcity of spring and summer poetry, has used his own findings against their clear testimony to argue that rebirth is Frost's major theme.³ But seasonal imagery can be used for many purposes, and a poet who hastens all his seasons toward an inevitable and almost perpetual winter is not talking about spring.

The way out of this dilemma is to abandon the approach to Frost through ideological preconceptions, and to put the poet not in a tradition of thought, but in a specifically "poetic" tradition. Such an approach has been taken most illuminatingly by Lynen and by Brower. Their books, despite quite different emphases, find that both Frost's subject and his methods derive from his conviction that poetry is a unique discipline with its own characteristic subject matters as well as its own uses of language.⁴

Frost, in the long "public poems" (Brower's phrase) which seem designed as defenses of the main corpus of his work, says this himself. When in "New Hampshire," he responds to the demand that he choose to be a prude or puke by evasion—"me for the hills where I don't have to choose" (p. 210)—he is not making a declaration of retreat from the con-

² Some examples of good criticism with transcendental presuppositions: Vivian C Hopkins, "Robert Frost: Out Far and In Deep," *Western Humanities Review*, XIV (Summer 1960), 247-63; Marion Montgomery, "Robert Frost and His Use of Barriers Man vs. Nature Towards God," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LVII (Summer 1958), 339-53; William T. Moynihan, "Fall and Winter in Frost," *Modern Language Notes*, LXXII (May 1958), 348-50; John T. Napier, "A Momentary Stay Against Confusion," *Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 1957), 378-94.

³ Moynihan, *MLN*, LXXXIII, who also notes that most of the rare spring and summer poems are undercut by end-season imagery.

⁴ John Lynen, *The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost* (New Haven, 1960); Reuben Brower *The Poetry of Robert Frost: Constellations of Intention* (New York, 1963).

temporary.⁵ He is resisting the attempt of the New York poet to confine him within arbitrary and limited boundaries which cut him off from his special task and subject as poet. "It seems a narrow choice the age insists on" (p. 211). Running to the hills, Frost is moving toward the poet's theme, a theme which city poets avoid not because it is out of date, but because they are afraid of it. This theme Frost calls "flux." The city poet "had a special terror of the flux/ That showed itself in dendrophobia" (pp. 210-11). This poet may rationalize his rejection of nature as a rejection of the irrelevant, but Frost believes that he is really covering up the paralyzing fear he feels when confronting "flux."

In "Build Soil" Frost repeats the idea that he uses the rural landscape to fulfill his commitments to the "poetic" theme. As he refused, in "New Hampshire," to write urban poetry, he refuses here to write agrarian poetry. His purpose in using nature is not to be political or topical, and he will not "advertise our farms to city buyers/ Or else write something to improve food prices" (p. 421). He denies that the times have

- "reached a depth
• Of desperation that would warrant poetry's
Leaving love's alternation, joy and grief,
The weather's alternation, summer and winter,
Our age-long theme" (p. 422).

Poetry's special subject, called "flux" in New Hampshire, is here called "alternation." If we give the theme its age-long name, "mutability," we have to recognize the truth in Frost's contention.⁶

This division between love's alternations and the weather's alternations corresponds roughly to the two types of poetry (excluding the apologetics) which are the bulk of Frost's work. First, we have the pastoral dialogues, eclogues and monologues dealing with the mutability of human relations and human existence. Among these we find poems about the severing of ties of life ("Out, Out,—"), of limb ("The Self-Seeker"), of youth, pride and beauty ("The Lovely Shall Be Choosers," "Two Witches"), of love ("The Hill Wife," "The Housekeeper"), even of grief ("Home Burial").

Second, we have the nature lyrics, usually composed as tiny dramas of recognition, illumination or resolution involving a lone speaker confront-

⁵ References to Frost's poetry, given in the text, are to the *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York, 1949).

⁶ Radcliffe Squires, *Major Themes of Robert Frost* (Ann Arbor, 1963), p. 38, mentions mutability as a theme in Frost's poetry, but does not explore the idea. Committed to a view of Frost as a transcendentalist, although a somewhat shaky one, the author sees Frost as attempting on the whole to deny or overcome or hide the vision of nature which he sees. But I would argue that the poems involve a confronting of the fact of mutability.

ing the landscape. In these poems, the landscape demonstrates the fact of mutability incessantly and obviously, forcing the speaker into reaction. In these poems, Frost shares with Emerson nothing more than the assumption that nature can be used to uncover and illustrate the underlying laws of the universe, because it operates by such laws. Ultimately, Frost's approach to nature is more scientific than Emersonian, for Frost does not take Emerson's next step, to insist that the laws of outer nature correspond to the laws of inner mind. Without this step there is no arriving at a transcendental absorption into nature.

Emerson himself recognized clearly that none of his statements about nature proved the doctrine of correspondences; he only maintained that it was a possible way of looking at the world, and one which was particularly congenial to human wishes. This justified, to him, taking it for true. "The advantage," he said in the "Idealism" section of *Nature*, "of the ideal theory over the popular faith is this, that it presents the world in precisely that view which is most desirable to the mind." But desirability is far from justification for Frost. On the contrary, this is the danger signal which calls for re-examination. He considers and resolves very early in his poetry the question of whether "correspondences" or any other version of the pathetic fallacy is a valid approach to nature, and answers negatively. The New England landscape reveals only the laws of the natural world.

Why then, one might ask, does Frost care about these laws? Isn't purely natural truth the province of the scientist? If nature reveals no human truth, why write poetry about it? Questions such as these lie beneath the insistence of most critics that Frost's approach to nature is somehow transcendental. But the answer is that of course Frost is interested in the human truth of nature; yet such truth need not be transcendental. Man wants to know the laws of the world he lives in precisely because it is the world *he* lives in. He can act meaningfully in it only if he understands it. If there are correspondences, he should know this; if there are not, he should know that, and he should not then act as if there were. And the laws which Frost's investigations uncover force him to abandon, regretfully, the transcendental position. For he does not find in nature a transcendental unity or an assurance of rebirth, but rather the grim laws of change and decay.

The poem "A Boundless Moment" with its teasing transcendental title, provides an epitome of the process of rejecting wishful thinking about nature for a more somber truth (p. 288). It describes what seems a glimpse of promise and delight in nature. Walking in the woods in March, the speaker and a friend sight something white through the trees. It looks

like flowers, and suggests May with all its connotations of spring, hope, rebirth. "Oh, that's the Paradise-in-bloom," I said."

But truth, with all its matter of fact, breaks in. Though it is pretty to imagine this white something to be May flowers, so hopefully named, the speaker and his friend cannot remain in this "strange world" they know to be false. They must reject a May interpretation when they know it is March. The interpretation of the mystery is "a young beech clinging to its last year's leaves."

This reality is not symbolically neutral. The substitution of a beech clothed in dead leaves for paradise-in-bloom effectively replaces images of spring with images of autumn, images of birth with those of death. Spring flowers viewed through the blurred vision of hope and wish turn to dead leaves when the eyes focus. The story recounted in "A Boundless Moment" dramatizes the movement of man's mind away from a comforting illusion toward a harsh truth. The cyclic seasonal imagery which has so often provided poets with symbols of faith and hope is here manipulated to suggest a movement which culminates in death. Insofar as man is part of the natural order, he is part of a system of perpetual waste and decay. What hope there is for man, what faith he may develop, cannot be based on the assumption that nature tends toward renewal and regeneration.

The recognition of and reaction to mutability constitute in a great number of cases the "action" in a Frost nature lyric. The channel for conveying the knowledge of mutability is nature, usually in autumn or winter, but occasionally in spring or summer. Moynihan has calculated that almost one-third of Frost's total output uses fall and winter imagery (see note 2). Among fall and winter poems are some of the poet's most famous—"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Desert Places," "The Wood Pile," "An Old Man's Winter Night," "After Apple Picking," "The Onset," "The Strong Are Saying Nothing," "I Will Sing You One O," "Bereft," to name a few. The idea of mutability in such poems is conveyed not only in their late season settings, but by the details which emphasize the inevitable and ceaseless movement toward death—night fall, leaf fall, snow fall. Fall in Frost's poetry is less a static season than a process which continues through all seasons, signifying the movement toward death.

Much the greater number of the occasional spring and summer poems are also poems about "fall" in this sense. I have found only one spring poem which is entirely affirmative, "Putting in the Seed." In the typical spring poems, like "Nothing Gold Can Stay," dawn goes down, or falls, to day, reminding us in its beauty mainly of its transience (p. 212). Spring pools, in earliest spring reflecting the sky "almost without defect," will

"like the flowers beside them soon be gone," drunk up by roots, turned into leaves which "darken nature" (p. 303). Summer is a time to mourn the lost spring and to wait, resignedly, the certain approach of autumn. The purple fringed flower is sought for and found, but the discovery means only that "summer was done" (p. 459). The oven-bird, from the darkened mid-summer wood, recalls the petal fall and heralds that "other fall" (p. 150).

Though Frost never hesitates to infer from spring and summer the certain coming of winter, he is not correspondingly ready to affirm from winter the certain return of spring. "The strong are saying nothing until they see" spring return with their own eyes (p. 391). And in "The Onset," that perplexing poem, even though the poet avers "I know that winter death has never tried/ The earth but it has failed," he cannot commit himself entirely to an affirmation. When all the white snow is gone from the earth, a few white objects around will still wear the color of mortality—a birch, for example, symbolizing (as trees usually do in Frost's poetry) natural life which is always necessarily obedient to universal law; and some houses and a church, symbols almost certainly for human life (p. 278).

Occasional gleams in this darkening universe serve only to make the darkness visible, as in "An Old Man's Winter Night" (p. 135). White is usually the color of death, especially as associated with snow. At times it signifies indifference, especially when connected with the stars (p. 12). And occasionally it is used as Melville uses it to mean an enticing but unfathomable truth, perhaps delusory. The white beech in "A Boundless Moment" is an example of this; so is the mysterious white something in "For Once, Then, Something," which may be truth, or perhaps a pebble of quartz (p. 275). The moon in "Acquainted With the Night" proclaims nothing relevant to man, only that the "time is neither wrong nor right" (p. 324), and falling snow in "Desert Places" has "no expression, nothing to express" (p. 386).

To this traditional imagery Frost has added a whole new vocabulary of metaphor drawn from scientific law, and thereby perhaps shown himself to be the one modern poet for whom scientific truth is not necessarily at odds with poetry. Radcliffe Squires has presented a reading of "West Running Brook" based on the Second Law of Thermodynamics, a law familiar in the literary context because Henry Adams selected it to explain history.⁷ But despite some startling coincidences of imagery in Frost's poems with some images used by William James in corresponding on the Second Law with Adams (the correspondence is detailed by

⁷ Squires, p. 103.

Squires), it is not likely that Frost found the law here. This is because Adams used it metaphorically to explain human history, while Frost leaves the law in context and uses it where it belongs, to explain nature.

This law simply says that the amount of disorder in the universe is continually increasing. In our universe, heat cannot of itself flow from a cold to a hot body; the movement of heat is always in one direction. It can never go backward, and thus our universe is an "irreversible system." Since the predominant temperature of our universe is cold, the predominant direction of heat flow is from individual bodies out into their environment, and as the temperature of the body approaches that of its environment (in our world, cools) it runs down, stops working. The process being irreversible, is one of a universe getting increasingly rundown, increasingly disorderly.

It is quite clear that Frost uses this law consciously in his poetry as a source of metaphor, for there are passages which refer to it unmistakably. In "The Wood Pile," for example, the pile itself provides an almost classic illustration of the law as it is left to "warm the frozen swamp/ With the slow, smokeless burning of decay" (p. 126). Job, discoursing with God in "A Masque of Reason," rejects Dante's view of the universe as a circular or reversible process where "rays return upon themselves," insisting "I hold rays deteriorate to nothing,/ First white, then red, then ultra-red, then out" (p. 601). In "West Running Brook," the man makes a parallel contrast between a view of the world as static, and his own view of the world running down.

"Some say existence . . .
Stands still and dances, but it runs away,
It seriously, sadly runs away,
To fill the abyss' void with emptiness" (p. 328).

The movement of the universe is the "universal cataract of death/ That spends to nothingness" (p. 329).

We are not dealing here with a modernized version of the golden age myth. The cataract is the eternal condition of existence itself. There never was a time in the created life of anything when that life was not running down. New life is continually coming into being, new dawns are dawning, new springs springing, but the instant of springing is the beginning of the fall. This idea is carried mainly in the image of the cataract (ironically but obviously associated with springtime) and appears in such poems as "One Step Backward Taken," where the whole world goes plunging down the gully (p. 519) and in "The Master Speed" where existence is characterized as the "rush of everything to waste" (p. 392). And the underlying winter and night metaphor in Frost's poetry is a

metaphor for a world both cold and chaotic, a world wasted and run down.

In such a world, what possible meaningful action can man perform? In a word, he can resist. That heat or energy with which the human being is endowed by being created, the losing of which is the inevitable progress of his life toward age and death, should be spent and can be spent in a "backward motion towards the source," refusing to cooperate with the downward rush (p. 329). Frost's word for the power which enables man to direct his portion of energy from "the one time and only the one/ When dust really took in the sun" (p. 342), is "mind." The hostile sea of "Sand Dunes" does not know mankind if "by any change of shape/ She hopes to cut off mind" (p. 330).

Mind is the uniquely human characteristic, and man defines himself therefore as man by asserting it against the push of matter. This mind, in "All Revelation," by probing, discovering, learning nature, in a sense creates it (p. 444); but on the final question of whether the existence of human mind implies purpose in the universe, whether the human mind stands in some relation to a divine mind, if there is a divine mind—on all such final or teleological questions Frost is consistently uncommitted.

Many critics have called Frost anti-intellectual or intellectually limited because of this lack of teleology, or because he tends to regard teleological systems with suspicion. Implicit in such criticism is the common view that there is only one way to be truly "intellectual," which is to be teleological, to talk about purpose in the universe. Frost seems rather to have decided, seriously and sincerely, that questions about purpose cannot be answered, and that man must therefore make his way without guessing at final causes. He is therefore, in the view of many, a writer of what can only be minor poetry.

The most extreme statement of this view, though it is to be found commonly in Frost criticism, occurs in Nitchie's *Human Values in the Poetry of Robert Frost* (see note 1), p. 209. Here the author maintains that it is far more profound and intellectual to adopt a patently absurd cosmology like Yeats' so long as one is thereby enabled to order the universe teleologically, than to hold fast to uncertainty and attempt to write good poetry without the scaffolding of a myth one cannot believe. To the notion that to be profound is to be teleological, Frost counters that to be profound is to be true to the results of one's thought and observation of the universe. This is the extent of his anti-intellectualism, for he is otherwise a persistent celebrant of the power and glory of the human mind.

Hence, even though he celebrates resistance, he does not thereby imply that there is something to be recovered or some place to return to. The

utopian dream of "The Lost Follower" (p. 483) and the nostalgic quest for Eden in "Directive" are alike delusory, because they assume a static period. But the assumption in Frost's poetry is that in creation there has been no stasis; only in death is there stillness. We go back, in "Directive," to discover only ruins; crumbled fragments are all we get of wholeness (p. 520). The home of timeless truths, in "The Black Cottage," is a "desert . . . walled/ By mountain ranges half in summer snow,/ Sand dunes held loosely in tamarask" (p. 77). In a world where all is rushing to chaos, no permanent recovery or journey back would be possible, and the timeless spot one aimed for either in the past or in the future would prove to be illusion. Return to the past is thus doubly impossible: it cannot be done, and it was never there. And Frost's notions of human action are strongly constrained by his grim requirement that they be limited to the possible.

The most a man can do is by continued resistance to hold his ground. Like the west running brook, his achievement will be a white wave "not gaining but not losing" (p. 328). The human action in Frost's poetry is a repeated gesture of defiance, a countless succession of moments of resistance, each of which is, in Frost's wonderfully apt phrase, "a momentary stay against confusion."

The poems are full of such gestures of stay, transient but affirmative within realistic limits. Such gestures constitute the action in many of Frost's little lyric dramas. Brown, having lost his footing in a dark and icy world, and slipped down two miles of mountainside, sets off back home, undaunted by the hour, the climb or the fact that he has to go miles out of his way to get back up (pp. 173-75). The brook of "West Running Brook" runs back against the source, and so is a good symbol for man, as is the moon which stays the spring thaw in "A Hillside Thaw" (p. 293). In "One Step Backward Taken," it is, as the title implies, a step back which saves the speaker from plunging down into chaos (p. 519). The unknown woodsman in "The Wood Pile" has left a human mark in that random wood where the view is "all in lines/ Straight up and down of tall slim trees/ Too much alike to mark or name a place by." The expense of his energy into that no-where has made it somewhere, has left the organized and ordered wood pile as the symbol of man's desire to make order out of the chaos of his environment. Having stacked his wood, he has turned on to fresh tasks, suggesting perhaps that it is less the achievement than the gesture of ordering which interests Frost. And this interest may stem from Frost's belief that the achievement of order is necessarily temporary; the wood pile is now warming the frozen swamp "with the slow smokeless burning of decay" (p. 126).

The speaker in "The Master Speed" wishes for the couple "in the rush of everything to waste/ That you may have the power of standing still" (p. 392). The isolated, grim lives which figure so frequently in Frost's poetry all exhibit that power which, in one poem, Frost most significantly calls "staying" (p. 337). All planting, building, tilling, chopping, line-laying—all such acts are human acts of ordering chaos. One of the most famous of such acts in Frost's poetry is mending wall. It becomes increasingly clear, as more critics work on the poem, that the wall-mending is not being condemned by the speaker.⁸ The speaker criticizes his neighbor for not asking *why* they build or mend walls. He cooperates with, even initiated, the mending process itself. The wall is mended as a gesture, annually repeated, against that "something" that "doesn't love a wall,/ That wants it down." Together, the speaker and his neighbor are engaged in the fundamental human enterprise, making a momentary stand against the principle of confusion that "spills the upper boulders in the sun" (p. 47).

"Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" provides another example. Here the speaker struggles against and overcomes the temptation to go along with the flood, to get swept into the inevitable course of nature. He turns a resolute back on the loveliness of dark woods and cold snow, picks up the reins and returns to his promises (p. 275). "Come In" is another version of the same story. The poet at the edge of the woods in a dark world resists the invitation of the bird to go into the still greater dark and lament. He resists, too, in the poem's final line, the temptation to read the world as inviting him to anything. He is out for stars, and he maintains his quest in the face of darkness and indifference (p. 446). The leaf treader, in the poem so named, rejects a similar invitation extended by the falling leaves, stamping them underfoot.

"They spoke to the fugitive in my heart as if it were leaf to leaf.
 They tapped at my eyelids and touched my lips with an invitation to
 grief.
 But it was no reason I had to go because they had to go.
 Now up to my knees to keep on top of another year of snow".
 (p. 388).

The aim in Frost's poetry is to develop a human act which has meaning in terms of the world man really lives in. The first step is to find out what kind of world it really is. The world Frost discovers, and he depicts the making of this discovery in many nature lyrics, is not friendly to man's great hopes, dreams and needs. But to despair in it is *not* the hu-

⁸ See John C. Broderick, *Explicator*, XIV, item 24 (Jan. 1956) and Carson Gibb, *Explicator*, XX, item 48 (Feb. 1962).

man answer to the grim world discovered. To be glum, as Frost says in "The Times Table," is the best way "to close a road, abandon a farm,/ Reduce the births of the human race,/ And bring back nature in people's place" (p. 336).

On the other hand, grandiose, sustained or programmatic actions are not the answer either, for this is a world in which such actions can be initiated only through blindness or willful self-deception, neither of which states accords with Frost's picture of "mind." What is possible is the small gesture, which, however, must be unremittingly repeated. The human life is not heroic in an epic sense. It is a life of staying.

This solution is certainly not transcendental. This is not a life in conformity with nature, nor a life striving to be merged into nature. On the contrary, it is rather an endless battle against the decaying flux which nature, lacking mind, is continually victim to and therefore continually illustrates. Because the flux endures as long as existence endures, the battle against it is endless.

Not the least of possible human actions is the poem. In "The Aim Was Song," man converts the natural and chaotic wind into song by *holding* it in his mouth long enough to *reverse* its direction, to convert north into south. The result is song, thus demonstrated to be a defiance of natural process (p. 274). In "The Grindstone," too, the blade is sharpened by overcoming the pressure exerted on the stone by a "father time-like man," by an act against the easy direction (p. 232). The body of ideas in the poetry and the kind of poetry written thus coincide. Frost's poems are examples of the one kind of action, mind staying flux, which he recognizes as meaningfully asserting the human in a fundamentally nonhuman world.



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Henry James and the French Revolution

MOST READERS ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE STANDARD SETTINGS OF HENRY James' novels—the garden, the drawing room, the country house, the theater, the museum. The community he creates appears limited and knowable. However, there is another more expansive Jamesian world which we enter through his imagery—the Rome of the Caesars, the Florence of the Medici, the Russia of Empress Catherine. James' imagination seized upon the most dramatic events in history, and especially the French Revolution. He was fascinated by the exciting scenes of the Revolution, as we are even today. Although two world wars and a revolution in Russia have occurred since 1789, the scenes of Parisians storming the Bastille, fighting atop the barricades, and of the guillotine still fire our imaginations. Even had James not asserted that "The most tragic element in the French Revolution, and thence surely the most tragic in human annals, was the so frequent case of the very young sent to the scaffold," we would still know that 1789 was for him the most important year in history. Images of the Revolution appear throughout his novels and tales, beginning as early as 1869 and continuing until 1904, and indicate a lasting concern with 1789. Among the metaphors portraying social and historical topics, the largest number center on the French Revolution.

One of his earliest tales, "Gabrielle de Bergerac," deals directly, not through imagery, with the *ancien régime* and the Revolution. It depicts French society before the Revolution, as represented in the idyllic love between an aristocrat and a peasant, and the destruction of this world with the fall of the Bastille. James indicates that 1789 creates a chasm in history, dividing the present from the past—a notion echoed in *The Portrait of a Lady* when Madame Merle tells Isabel Archer, "I speak as if I were a hundred years old, you say? Well, I am . . . I was born before the French Revolution . . . I belong to the old, old world." The Revolution's legacy to Europe is often a minor issue in James' novels, and most significantly in *The Princess Casamassima*. Its "turpitude and horror" and "spirit of destruction" are paramount to the conservative, while its

"magnificent energy" and "spirit of creation" are remembered by the radical. Like his hero Hyacinth Robinson, James saw both aspects of 1789, and his double vision outlines the paradoxes of revolution.

James' concern does not isolate him from his contemporaries but rather links him with a key impulse of the nineteenth century and its seminal thinkers. James' entire generation focused on 1789, for the Victorians were terrified by the thought of radical revolution in England, and mapped their plans accordingly. Thus, Bagehot in *The English Constitution* claimed that the English nobility "dare not frame a society of enjoyment as the French aristocracy once formed it," for they knew it would precipitate a revolution. Rather than court revolutionary upheaval, the ruling classes acquiesced in the demand for reform, and change in England transpired through evolution of institutions. The English ruling classes were continually under pressure to make these changes; for the revolutionary demands of 1789 reverberated throughout the nineteenth century, first in 1848 and then in 1871.

James too reacted to the renewed violence in France. In his *Autobiography* he recalled the frightening news of the 1848 Revolution, as his two uncles announced to his father that "the Revolution had triumphed in Paris and Louis Philippe had fled to England." The fact that "kings had sometimes to flee" was a startling revelation to a small boy, forming a "new and striking image." Nearly half a century later, he incorporated the image in a tale when he described a princess leaving a sick man's house "as promptly as if a revolution had broken out."

In 1872 he was living in Paris—the "most brilliant city in the world" and "also the most bloodstained." The French capital spoke to him of the revolutionary past, and in *A Small Boy and Others* he wrote that the Parisian buildings had "a suggestion of the generations and dynasties and armies, the revolutions, and restorations they had seen come and go." The Paris Commune, destroyed a year before he arrived, only augmented his feeling for the city. To his brother William he wrote, "Paris continues to seem very pleasant, but doesn't become interesting. You get tired of a place which you can call nothing but *charmant*. . . . Beneath all this neatness and coquetry, you seem to smell the Commune suppressed but seething." Throughout his stay in France in the 1870s he wondered if the "celebrated era of revolutions" was to be reborn from the ashes of the Commune. Extinguishing the spirit of the Commune, he claimed, was essential to stability and he rebuked Victor Hugo when he demanded amnesty for the Communards. This, James declared, would be embarking again on the road to revolution.

From his French experience in the 1870s he learned to appreciate "the precious art of compromise"—a skill the British had profitably cultivated.

James opted for English legislative change and rejected the pattern of French violence. Like Burke, he thought the bond which linked the present, the past and the future a sacred one. However, like many Englishmen, he accepted the changes wrought by the nineteenth-century reform bills in part because he dreaded revolution in the streets of London. He feared future revolutionaries springing from the "black depths" of the people, but believed that the laboring classes, at least in the late nineteenth century, had not yet found a dynamic leader.

The French Revolution reshaped the politics of nineteenth-century Europe, and the literature of the age in turn reinterpreted and judged the issues of 1789. Carlyle's *The French Revolution*, Taine's *The Origins of Modern France*, Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* and Hugo's *Ninety-Three* were closely read by James, and influenced his thinking. James' reviews of Hugo's novel and Taine's history indicate his reaction to works about the French Revolution. Both articles, written in the 1870s, demonstrate how unnerved he was by the Paris Commune. Taine, terrified by the proletarian upheaval of 1871, attempted to execrate the French revolutionary tradition, and James was sympathetic to his effort. He applauded Taine's thesis that 1789 was *unnecessary*, and that the Revolution was guided by mob rule. Furthermore, he defended Taine against the charge that he took "a reactionary view of the French Revolution," and claimed that it was "high time . . . from the liberal and philosophical standpoint" that a study presented the "injury" the Revolution inflicted on France. James was sharply critical of *Ninety-Three*, for he had no sympathy with Hugo, who supported the Terror of 1793. Thinking of the Commune, he told his audience that Hugo's "fellow countrymen lately took occasion to remind the world that they were of the same stock as their ancestors, and when they had warmed to the work again, they could burn and kill on the same extensive scale." He advised that "If the French people could forego all manner of allusion to it, we are sure the result would be most favorable to their intellectual health."

James feared that his society, in focusing on the rise of liberty, neglected the chaos and brutality of the Revolution, and therefore welcomed Taine's volume. He also warmly received *A Tale of Two Cities*, and praised Dickens' vivid, accurate mirroring of the Revolution. Of the English analyses of 1789, James was most at home with Matthew Arnold's. Arnold had affirmed in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" that the French Revolution "is—it will long remain—the most animating event in history"; a sentiment James shared. While Arnold defended Burke's treatment of 1789, James praised Taine's. As literary men, both agreed that the era of Voltaire and Rousseau had had a greater impact on European thinking than that of the Revolution, and they

rebuked the French for dissipating their energy in the political arena, instead of concentrating on cultural growth.

James' use of imagery derived from the Revolution also links him to other novelists of the epoch. In *Bleak House* Dickens likened Lady Dedlock's sinister French maid to "some woman from the streets of Paris in the reign of terror," and in *The Scarlet Letter* Nathaniel Hawthorne spoke of the pillory as "as effectual an agent in the promotion of good citizenship, as ever was the guillotine among the terrorists of France." Like Dickens and Hawthorne, James especially recalled the Terror and the guillotine, but other novelists concentrated on different images. Samuel Butler's metaphors, as evidenced in *The Way of All Flesh*, indicate his interest in Robespierre, and Melville's references to Anacharsis Cloots in *Moby Dick*, *The Confidence-Man* and "Billy Budd" reveal his unique perspective on 1789. Many novelists of the nineteenth century drew images of the Revolution, yet none with James' frequency.

James' notion of the French Revolution, and his use of French Revolution imagery indicate his roots in a particular culture. His relationship to 1789 demonstrates that he was not, as so often claimed, an artist beyond the reach of history, and aloof from contemporary issues. When we relate James to 1789 we also illustrate the nature of his connection with late Victorian society, for he considered that society—and here his profound understanding of that society is most apparent—similar to the *ancien régime*. James was particularly interested in the French Revolution as a destructive force which annihilated a society and a social class; "the youth and maidens, all bewildered and stainless, lately born into a world decked for them socially with flowers, and for whom, none the less suddenly, the horror of horrors arose." It was tragic because it marked the death of a splendid society. James was often enamored of the *ancien régime*, and his idealization of the period is apparent in *A Little Tour in France*, which also convincingly illustrates his repugnance toward the followers of Robespierre and Danton. In the Loire Valley he dreamt with nostalgia of the "old French monarchy" and reflected that "as that monarchy was splendid and picturesque, a reflection of the splendor still glitters in the current of the Loire." At Chambord he sensed the "vanished monarchy . . . so strong, so splendid," and at Chenonceaux he asserted that the middle of the eighteenth century in France was "the age of good society, the period when it was well for appreciative people to have been born." He even praised Louis XVI, "good King Louis," "the father of his people," who, James recalled, remitted various taxes. Yet James was never intoxicated by the sweetness of *ancien régime* life, and always remembered its bitterness, its vulgarity. His position is complex, for while he appreciated the cultural achievements of eighteenth-

century France, he was repelled by the evils of the civilization. The *ancien régime* was in many ways his utopia, but he also saw the peasants' poverty and the aristocrats' lavish waste of money.

He seems to have felt that economic factors contributed to the "deluge," and an image in *What Maisie Knew* suggests that the dispute over money, between the upper classes and their servants, is an issue in a revolution. Maisie has been given several sovereigns, "The wages of sin," by her mother, one of which is taken by a servant. This creates an antagonism between the two, and although the servant has stolen the money, Maisie is accused of being a "horrid low thief." She feels guilty because her servant has a sense of wrong. These incidents are for Maisie "like the Revolutions she had learnt by heart in Histories," because she feels that she is getting a "glimpse of the way in which Revolutions are prepared." Then, too, this image portrays an upper class fearful of revolt, and guilty about its wealth, two characteristics James attributed to aristocracies. In "Gabrielle de Bergerac" he indicated that the comfort of the nobility was possible only because of the exploitation of the peasantry.

James was much more critical of the immorality within the nobility itself, than of the injustices practiced on the lower classes. Reading Taine's *The Origins of Modern France* he was horrified by the descriptions of the extravagant manners and customs introduced by Louis XIV and of the King's attendants, who drew exorbitant salaries for performing unspeakable functions. He was scandalized that thousands of francs were wasted on the "pompous" architecture of Versailles. The society's great ladies, too, revealed both grandeur and corruption. Writing in *A Little Tour in France* he claimed that "The sixty years that preceded the French Revolution were the golden age of fireside talk and the pleasures which proceed from the presence of women in whom the social art is both instinctive and acquired." He was not thinking, it must be remembered, of physical pleasure. In a review of Saint Beuve's *Portraits*, a volume which discussed the careers of Mesdames de Sévigné, Roland and de Staël, he claimed that their biographies revealed both the degeneracy and the accomplishments of the *ancien régime*. The position of women signalized the level of the entire civilization. James contended that the salons were formed for two reasons—conversation, and a snare for lovers. Illicit love, born in the cultured literary salons, degraded the civilization.

James' attitude toward his own society is colored by similar ambiguities. He spoke disparagingly of the "rotten and *collapsible*" condition of the English upper class, which made it like "the French aristocracy before the revolution," but elatedly affirmed that his group had "the longest and happiest innings in history—happier and longer . . . than

their congeners of the old French time." His ambivalence is apparent in his portrait of the English country house and drawing room. The former was "one . . . of the highest results of civilization," but "onerous" because of its "gilded bondage," and the latter was like the *ancien régime* salon, for it was dignified by the woman of cultured manners, and at the same time degraded by her spurious morals. The essential contradictions which plagued eighteenth-century France, James claimed, could be found in late-nineteenth-century British society.

Another reason for likening the English upper class to the prerevolution French aristocracy was his belief that it too was fated to destruction. From the late 1870s until the eve of World War I, James predicted that European society would be destroyed as Marie Antoinette's was in 1789. His worst fears were realized with the opening of World War I, for he saw the conflagration as a threat to the culture and tradition he admired, at the same time that he found the world fascinating and thrilling because it was a world in crisis. The war, "world revolution" for James, was described as the "plunge" into an "abyss of blood and darkness." The First World War, like the French Revolution, brought to the surface the antagonisms within the society, revealing that behind the illusion of a "high refinement of civilization" there lurked an "abomination" in English society. The English were being punished for their moral decay and materialism, as the *ancien régime*, in Carlyle's thinking, was devastated for its injustices. Accordingly the Germans were depicted like the French Jacobins—brutal and sinister.

James was fully aware of the evil in Victorian England. Newton Arvin recognized this when he wrote that James saw the "corruption" and "philistinism" of his society "as few of his contemporaries saw them." However, the evils of the society were counterbalanced by its high cultural achievements, and they invalidated, in James' reckoning, the path of revolution. Although it was fated to destruction, he hoped that his class would survive the World War as the *ancien régime* survived the Revolution "in patches and scraps," and in the midst of the conflict he imagined that he and his friends would gather again in "a blessed little Chelsea drawing room." He likened the event to the "reopening of the salons . . . after the French Revolution." But he died in 1916 and like the guillotined aristocrats could not rejoin drawing-room society. He sensed his own doom in 1910 when he wrote, "I look ten years older, with my bonny tresses ten degrees whiter (like Marie Antoinette's in the Concierge)."

Revolution was not anathema to James, for he proudly recalled the heroic struggles of the American colonists in their fight against England. He pronounced the American Civil War a "social revolution as complete

as any the world has seen," and in a curious image compared Northern troops to Cromwell's forces in the English Revolution. He never criticized our Civil War simply because it revolutionized American life, and was, in fact, very proud of General Sherman's activities in the South. He developed from the four traumatic years of civil strife an appreciation for political order. In *The Bostonians* he expressed his hope that the nation would bind up her wounds, that the different sections would merge harmoniously, and looking at France and the consequences of 1789 he pleaded for a similar process. It is quite misleading to speak of Henry James, as Maxwell Geismar does, as a "royalist." Opposed to the extremism which flowed from the French Revolution, he nevertheless believed in the right of revolution. James' remarks also remind us that the ideals of the Revolution were betrayed—that the promises of 1789 were reneged. If we imagine for a moment Henry James thrown back in time to that era he would be counted among the Girondists, firmly opposed to the royalists' demands. Nor was he a "royalist" in his own day. He lodged President McKinley among the "provincial iniquities . . . and bloody billionaires," was repelled by Theodore Roosevelt's jingoism, while he respected the British radical John Bright, and counted himself a supporter of the Liberal party in England. He was not, of course, a political man, and his attitude toward politics was skeptical and cynical. He suggested no solutions, yet continually attacked the social order.

One of the most significant incidents of World War I, in James' judgment, was the German bombardment of Rheims Cathedral. Following the attack he became violently anti-German, for he termed it "the most hideous crime ever perpetrated against the mind of man." In 1882, thirty-two years prior to the bombardment of Rheims, James visited the Cathedral and declared that it was "more fortunate" than many other churches for it had not "suffered from the iconoclasts of the Revolution." He noted "no absent heads nor broken noses" among the church statues. Another church, Saint Martin, "received its death blow from the revolution." The sight of the ruined churches provoked James to condemn the French Revolution, not as a religious man, but as an artist grieved by the mutilated paintings and statues. He revered the great medieval churches as monuments to art, and not as centers of worship. Accordingly, he concluded that "the spectre of the great Revolution" appeared "in the shape of the destruction of something beautiful and precious." James virulently denounced the German shelling of Rheims Cathedral for the same reason he condemned the Jacobin leveling of churches: as an affront to art. His reaction to the German attack was prepared for by his understanding of the French Revolution.

The claims of art, James believed, were incompatible with the demands of revolution. From his examination of the past, he knew that the arts often flourished in rapacious, decadent societies, and, as exemplified in the Renaissance, that the great patrons of the arts were also vicious despots. Destroying aristocratic society, as in the French Revolution, meant the eradication of a valid and meaningful culture. The master revolutionary, as James depicted him in *The Princess Casamassima*, "would cut up the ceilings of the Veronese, so that every one might have a little piece." Rejecting revolution and embracing art, James felt that art, and not revolution, made the world a fairer place to live. He expressed this through the hero of *The Princess Casamassima* when he asserts that "The monuments and treasures of art" are based "upon all the despotisms, the cruelties, the exclusions, the monopolies, and the rapacities of the past" but that they make "the world . . . less of a 'bloody sell' and life more of a lark."

Most of James' French Revolution images record the flight, capture, imprisonment and execution of aristocrats during the Terror. James' concern with this facet of the Revolution indicates his belief that it betrayed the cause of liberty. He considered the seizure and guillotining of émigrés in Paris a violation of the Rights of Man.

In *Roderick Hudson* he likens his artist-hero to a "noble young émigré of the French Terror, seized before reaching the frontier, and showing while brought back, a white face, indescribable, that anticipated the guillotine." In *The Golden Bowl* he illuminates the prisons of the Revolution when he describes the meeting of Princess Maggie and Prince Amerigo. He writes, "It was every moment more and more for her as if she were waiting with him in his prison—waiting with some gleam of remembrance of how noble captives in the French Revolution, the darkness of the Terror, used to make a feast, or a high discourse of their last resources." James' imagination bypassed the leveling of the Bastille, the symbol of the *ancien régime's* tyranny, and fixed on the prisons of the Republic, filled with aristocrats. In a metaphor from the *Notebooks* Millie Theale is likened to a "creature dragged shrieking to the guillotine—to the shambles." The guillotine, in James' view, epitomized the Revolution's destructive, mechanistic and suprahuman force, and when Hyacinth Robinson has a vision of Paris he imagines the guillotine at the center of the Place de la Revolution; the victims around it.

In James' casting Danton, Marat and Robespierre were the villains of the drama, and Marie Antoinette and Madame Roland the heroines. Because the aristocrats could withstand the psychological sufferings inflicted by the Terror, he deemed them heroic. Piecing together James'

imagery we can read Marie Antoinette's downfall, for a metaphor in the story "Mona Montravers" mentions "the famous *rentrée* of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette from Varennes" and an image in "The Spoils of Poynton" presents her incarcerated, as Mrs. Gereth is compared to "Marie Antoinette in the Concierge." An image of Madame Roland is important in *The Ambassadors*, for Madame de Vionnet dresses "for thunderous . . . times . . . in the simplest coolest white, of a character so old fashioned . . . that Madame Roland on the scaffold, must have worn something like it." Marie Antoinette and Madame Roland are symbolic, for their deaths indicate the fate of the *ancien régime*. Madame Roland's salon, a center of literary activity, closed after her death, and represented the destruction of culture by the Revolution. Her execution also followed the collapse of the Girondist Ministry. James respected Madame Roland's Girondist politics, and her judgment, for she had said while going to the guillotine, "O Liberty, what crimes are committed in thy name." James knew the remark, shared her sentiment, and once ironically declared, "Oh, *Académie Française*, what crimes are committed in thy name." The central figure of "Gabrielle de Bergerac" is also a Girondist. James described him as "no *sans-culotte*" and added that he "went to the scaffold along with the Girondists." He thought them "reasonable" and "cultured" revolutionaries.

Several images picture the masses in the streets of Paris. When Olive Chancellor of *The Bostonians* speaks to an enraged audience she is likened to "a female firebrand of Paris revolutions erect on a barricade." In *The Wings of the Dove* the personality of Millie Theale's doctor is "like a head on a pike in a French Revolution, bobbing before a window." On one occasion James indulged in a description, in his view, of "the most hideous episode of the Revolution." At Nantes, under "the bloody reign of the monster Carrier and his famous *noyades*," in James' words, "hundreds of men and women, tied together in couples, were set afloat upon rafts and sunk to the bottom of the Loire." In other images we recognize James excited and captivated by the people of Paris. There is nothing sinister about the French Revolution imagery which surrounds Millicent Henning. She represents the "plebeian character," and James describes her "with a red cap of liberty on her head and her white throat bared so that she could be able to shout the louder the Marseillaise of that hour." Another image presents the "Feast of Reason," an event instituted by the Revolution in 1793, and indicates James' admiration for the dignified French people.

James neglected, however, the sense of fraternity which Herman Melville recognized as a valuable achievement of 1789. Melville indicated the humane cosmopolitanism of the Revolution in an image in "Billy Budd."

The genial and brotherly sailors he described "were made up of such an assortment of tribes and complexions as would have well fitted them to be marched up by Anacharsis Cloots before the bar of the first French Assembly as Representatives of the Human Race." Melville's understanding of the French Revolution's place in history differs from James'. He noted that the Revolution rectified "the old world's hereditary wrongs," but then became "a wrongdoer one more oppressive than the kings." James would have concurred with this analysis, but Melville went on to claim that the eventual outcome was "a political advance along nearly the whole line for Europeans." Unlike the author of "Billy Budd," James envisioned no progress following the French Revolution. Freedom had been engulfed in the Terror, and the fundamental conflict of the French Revolution era—a conflict between culture and anarchy—beset his own society. The barbarous Germans in warring on Europe were challenging civilization as vigorously as had the French Jacobins, and World War I was as dangerous a threat to England as "the long Napoleonic menace" had been. History, in James' assessment, followed a cyclical pattern. Civilizations reached a zenith, then declined and disintegrated.

Newton Arvin claimed that James "made out no historic meaning" in the events of his era. Yet, when we comprehend his analogy between the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the crisis of 1914 we recognize James' ordering of history. He not only recorded the important ideas and forces of his civilization, but recognized their place in the movement of history. He never threw up his hands in despair, never characterized history as meaningless nightmare, but continuously worked to comprehend and order the events of his day.

James' art was molded by his sense of the past, and it in turn reshaped the facts of history. He was the novelist as historian.



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Melville's Master in Chancery and His Recalcitrant Clerk

CONSIDERING HIS VORACIOUS AND RATHER UNDISCIPLINED READING, WE SHOULD not be too surprised to find that Herman Melville had a considerable acquaintance with some of the more arcane points of law and Anglo-American legal history. Yet, for the most part Melville was content to use his knowledge of law either to ridicule the legal profession or to suggest the failure of law, with all its complexities, its immense traditionalist structure, to eradicate human evil. He is jocular about the situation of the lawyers in the Church of the Apostles in *Pierre*: they are restricted to the ground floor "as people would seldom willingly fall into legal altercations unless the lawyers were always very handy to help them." But the vacant upper floors suggest "unwelcome similitudes" to the lawyers, "having reference to the crowded state of their basement-pockets, as compared with the melancholy condition of their attics;—alas! full purses and empty heads!"¹ Chapters LXXXIX and XC of *Moby Dick*, "Fast Fish and Loose Fish" and "Heads or Tails" include more legal citations and examples than any other chapters in the novel, but present a bitter picture of law as reducible merely to the concepts of possession and force.²

One of Melville's short stories, "Bartleby the Scrivener," does deal entirely with a lawyer and his office staff. Though critics who have analyzed the story have paid little attention to the narrator's profession, it is, I believe, important to a full understanding of the story. At the time the story opens, the unnamed narrator had enlarged his "snug business among rich men's bonds, and mortgages, and title deeds" to become a Master in Chancery. Why this specific office? The answer provides the underlying metaphor for the story.

¹ (New York, Grove Press, 1957), p. 371.

² "Fast Fish and Loose Fish" is something of a metaphoric analysis of the limitations of natural law.

The situation of the Court of Chancery is unique to Anglo-American law. Courts of Chancery were founded in England in the fourteenth century, directly descended from the position of the Lord Chancellor of the King. The Chancellor, first appointed under Edward the Confessor, acted as the king's secretary, chief chaplain, holder of the great seal and as spiritual adviser, the "conscience of the king." It could be a delicate position, as the examples of Becket, Wolsey and More attest. The Chancellor very early in English history became a force at law. In a monarchy the king must possess the power to dispense justice, to defend the poor and the defenseless. Moreover, since English common law tended to be circumscribed by literalness and dependence upon precedent, subjects asked the king for relief from injuries which demanded redress beyond the power of the ordinary courts. Since the Chancellor was always a churchman during the early reigns, and therefore might be expected to judge morality as well as legality, the king often passed the complaints on to him, at first for advice, later for positive action.

For a long period the Chancellor's powers were only advisory, though as an ecclesiastic he could inflict the punitive powers of the church. But in the reign of Richard II, Chancellor Waltham set up a Court of the Chancellor and issued *subpoenae* which were recognized by both the king and the people of England. The court thus founded was immensely powerful in the beginning, though it declined through the centuries. Offices of twelve Masters in Chancery were then created, to be chosen by the Chancellor and to hear cases in Westminster Palace. They made recommendations to the Chancellor who passed the final decision. They were expected to know Roman law as well as common law and took precedence over all serjeants-at-law. With rank came jealousy and criticism. In the fifth year of the reign of Richard II they were criticized by the Commons as "over fatt both in boddie and purse, and over well furred in their benefices, and put the King to veiry great cost more than needed."³

Chancery was transported across the Atlantic to the English colonies where it flourished side by side with courts of common law. The Courts of Chancery in America were closely identified with the royal governors, as their heritage might suggest. But, strangely enough, after the revolution they were retained, sometimes even strengthened for the first few decades of the new nation's life until, in the middle of the nineteenth century, a wave of reform combined chancery pleadings with common

³ D. M. Kerly, *An Historical Sketch of the Equitable Jurisdiction of the Court of Chancery* (Cambridge, England, 1890), p. 59.

law. In 1848 the state of New York did away with the court, though it kept many of its forms of pleading.⁴

For Melville's purposes in the writing of "Bartleby," two aspects of the history of chancery were so significant that he needed to make the particular point that his narrator had been conferred a mastership in chancery. First, the fact that the office existed in a republic almost a century after the last colonial governor had departed was an extraordinary anachronism.⁵ The Master in Chancery, essentially, draws his power from association with the king, not at all from "below," from the common-law courts and, in a democracy, from the people. A connoisseur of symbols, Melville must have seen the possibilities of a character who has the position of a Master in Chancery in historic-symbolic terms, as he does the specksynder in *Moby Dick*, or the mates and harpooneers as "Knights and Squires." Moreover, the royal association of the Master in Chancery perfectly suited the microcosm of the law office at — Wall Street; it is the narrator who is the ordering force, the regal or possibly even divine power who rules over the so various dispositions of his employees—Turkey, Nippers and Ginger Nut—and creates a functional *society* from their disparate parts. The possibilities of this metaphor in terms of readings for the story are endless: the narrator may be God, Pilate or the king; the office group mankind, the Jews at the time of Christ or society in general; Bartleby enquiring man, the historic Christ or the unsatisfied artist in society. One need only substitute a new foundation, and off we go into a new allegory.

A second consideration implicit in the history of Chancery may have been more important in Melville's choice of the trope. Courts of Chancery were commonly also called Courts of Equity and differed in principle from courts of common law as their second title suggests. "The evolution of law," a recent writer has stated, "is to a large extent the history of its absorption of equity." While primitive law is concerned only with the maintenance of public order and strict law (common law) is principally interested in individual security, equity draws its principles from "natural law," and is concerned with what can only be described as the *ideal* application of justice. Aristotle defined equity as "that idea of justice which contravenes the written law," and that definition has hardly been im-

⁴ William C. Robinson, *Elements of American Jurisprudence* (Boston, 1900), pp. 300-1; Kerly, *Historical Sketch . . .*, pp. 28-25, 94-112, *passim*, 283-88; Lewis Mayers, *The American Legal System* (New York, 1955), pp. 61-62; Ralph A. Newman, *Equity and Law: A Comparative Study* (New York, 1961), p. 50.

⁵ It is perhaps worth noting that Pennsylvania, while a colony, had no Courts of Chancery. They were instituted briefly after the Revolution. The association with royal prerogative may thus be seen on the one hand, the forgetfulness of the colonists concerning this association in the first flush of democracy on the other.

proved upon.⁶ Courts of Equity or Chancery, then, are not "higher" than courts of common law, but are courts wherein different principles of law are extended—principles of ideality instead of precedent, principles of absolute instead of relative justice.

We can perhaps trace Melville's thinking to his arrival at the *donnée* of a Master in Chancery. We know that from July 6, 1852, to sometime before the publication of "Bartleby" in *Putnam's* for November, 1853, Melville was wrapped in the story of "Agatha." This was the story told him by a New Bedford lawyer of a woman who married a man whom she rescued as a shipwrecked survivor. The man then left her and married again in Philadelphia, raising a family and living an apparently normal life. When his first wife, Agatha, finally attempted to reach him again, seventeen years after his departure, he had died and left everything to his second wife and family. The equitable division of his testament was then the knotty legal problem faced by the courts.⁷ As material to be converted into fiction, the story naturally divides into two parts: the legal difficulty of dispensing equity to the two wives, for which the wisdom of a Solomon would seem to be necessary, and the description of Agatha's sensibilities as she waited, alone, on her island for seventeen years for news of her lover. Melville seems to have been preoccupied, indeed, almost obsessed with the latter consideration during this period. He offered the story to Hawthorne, sensing doubtless that the author of "Wakefield" would find the matter sympathetic, then asked Hawthorne to return the notes he had made in hope that he could write the story himself. Melville never wrote the story of Agatha, but he did write "Bartleby" as a first fruit of this absorption and, later, the story of Hunilla, the "Chola Widow." The latter story is closely connected to the sensibility of an Agatha-character; the former, we may presume, was abstracted from the philosophical and legal background of the problem of Agatha. Agatha's was a problem of the conflict of common and equity law, and Melville must have encountered the confusion (then rife in New York because of the procedural changes of 1848) between common law and equity. Never one to miss the possibilities of an "ambiguity," of a metaphor deep enough to suggest that fundamental division between the real and the ideal, the material and the spiritual, Melville seized

⁶ Newman, *Equity and Law*, pp. 13, 255. Newman gives the citation from Aristotle as *Rhetoric*, Book I, Chap. 13. The apparent paradox of a distinction between "justice" and "equity" is the subject of innumerable treatises by distinguished lawyers and judges, many of which are cited by Newman in an appendix to his work, pp. 269-70.

⁷ See *The Letters of Herman Melville*, eds. Merrell R. Davis and William H. Gilman (New Haven, 1964), pp. 153-63. The biographical significance of the "Agatha" letters was first investigated by Harrison Hayford, "The Significance of Melville's 'Agatha' Letters," *English Literary History*, XIII (1946), 299-310.

upon the ironic possibilities for his newly conferred Master in Chancery.

Several recent critics have suggested that the narrator and Bartleby are "double" characters. Mordecai Marcus interprets this "doubling" of the narrator in Bartleby as a challenge to the narrator's adjustment to the conditions of the world. Kingsley Widmer sees the same "doubling" in a slightly larger sense: Bartleby's challenge of the narrator's "safe" position is a stinging criticism of the limitations of benevolence, rationalism and self-conscious humanism.⁸ The implications of the narrator's position as pettifogger recently raised to a mastership in Chancery tend to bear out either of these interpretations. A lawyer in his position is a lawyer just awakening to the complexities of law and life. The assurance he had as "one of those unambitious lawyers who never address a jury, or in any way draw down public applause," but who remain safe "in the cool tranquility of a snug retreat," is suddenly challenged by the whole new system of equity pleading and decision. The Master in Chancery is not concerned with the practicable, the workable, but strives for the ideal. Because of his new office, our narrator, hitherto content with a relative legal world and philosophy, is suddenly thrust into the legal equivalent of striving for absolute justice. Almost immediately, *and as a direct result of that new position* (for he must hire Bartleby as a consequence of the expected increase in his volume of work), he is challenged in his new legal thinking by the exactly apposite problem of Bartleby.

Most of the details of the story contribute to this central metaphor of the pettifogger in Chancery. The narrator's pre-Bartleby existence is one based on the idea of adjustment of and to conditions, an application of the common-law mind. His two unlikely clerks, Turkey and Nippers, balance each other out like contrasting paragraphs on a contract. And the narrator may be punning, but he is not entirely ironic in his admiration for Ginger Nut when he says, "indeed, to this quick-witted youth, the whole noble science of the law was contained in a nutshell."

When Bartleby arrives in the office, the narrator's first thoughts are still toward "adjustment." He favors Bartleby because he is "glad to have among my corps of copyists a man of so singularly sedate an aspect, which I thought might operate beneficially upon the flighty temper of Turkey and the fiery one of Nippers." That this assumed purpose is really directed toward his own well-being is shown by the fact that the narrator places

⁸ Mordecai Marcus, "Melville's Bartleby as a Psychological Double," *College English*, XXIII (1962), 365-68; Kingsley Widmer, "The Negative Affirmation: Melville's 'Bartleby,'" *Modern Fiction Studies*, VIII (1963), 276-86. Norman Springer, "Bartleby and the Terrors of Limitation," *PMLA*, LXXX (1965), 410-18, further extends the investigation of interaction between the narrator and Bartleby in the area of adjustment to a nihilistic condition.

Bartleby in his own office, separated from him only by a folding screen, in order that "privacy and society were conjoined." Again, the purpose and technique represent the workings of a practical common-law mind.

At first, Bartleby conforms to the narrator's expectations. His accommodation to the material, common-law needs of the narrator is borne out by the association of eating imagery connected with his early copying: he is "famishing for something to copy," he seemed to "gorge himself" on the work with "no pause for digestion." But, immediately after the narrator makes his first statement in the story based upon the new kind of consciousness demanded by his new position in Equity, Bartleby begins his retreat into spiritual recalcitrance. The narrator notes that the reading of copy is a "dull, wearisome, and lethargic affair," intolerable "to some sanguine temperaments," as an example of which he cites "the mettlesome poet, Byron." When Bartleby first "prefers not to" read copy immediately after this passage, he is truly acting as the narrator's double. A similar progression follows through the story. Each time the narrator is made aware in his own mind of a complexity, an unpredictable or ambiguous element in life hitherto undreamed of in his pettifogger mentality, Bartleby presents an applicable case in point.

First, after Bartleby's refusal to read copy in front of the whole office staff, the narrator notes that "when a man is browbeaten in some unprecedented⁹ and violently unreasonable way, he begins to stagger in his own plainest faith," and he calls upon "any disinterested persons" present "for some reinforcement for his own faltering mind." When the narrator does this, he finds that such *amici curiae* as Turkey and Nippers are not really helpful to him. Next, he determines to use Bartleby to "cheaply purchase a delicious self-approval," "to lay up in my soul what will eventually prove a sweet morsel for my conscience." Accordingly, he first provokes the post-prandially pugnacious Turkey against Bartleby, then demurs—"Pray, put up your fists," then a few days later repeats the scene in the morning, this time deterring Nippers from assault upon Bartleby with a Bartlebyan injunction himself: "'Mr. Nippers,' said I, 'I'd prefer that you would withdraw for the present.'"

At this point in the story the narrator (and, subordinately, the other members of his office besides Bartleby) has been indoctrinated to the point of a superficial and literal comprehension of the principles of

⁹ Surely the pun on the common-law pleader's staple, "precedent," is intentional. Throughout the story Melville has succeeded in parodying the style of legal rhetoric. The second paragraph of the story, for example, includes two instances of the "not un-" construction: "I was not unemployed in my profession. . . . I was not insensible to the late John Jacob Astor's good opinion." There are many other stunning examples of legal periphrasis. I discuss Melville's punning on the word "master" and the principle of *assumpsit* below.

equity. The key to their condition is in the word "prefer." The narrator finds that he uses the word "upon all sorts of not exactly suitable occasions," Turkey and Nippers use the word without even being aware of it. The word itself is exquisitely chosen by Melville to suggest the human and existential condition of "bearing before" or "setting before" in the matter of consequential choice. It is also apposite to the situation of equity pleading as opposed to common law pleading. Only in equity pleading is the preference of the plaintiff for one kind of restitution over another a consideration.¹⁰

Shortly after the narrator finds that Bartleby has "turned the tongues, if not the heads, of myself and clerks" through their own unconscious choice of the word "prefer," the narrator gives Bartleby his notice. But, of course, when the time is up Bartleby is still there. The narrator then embarks upon yet another extension of the principles of equity in hopes of ridding himself of Bartleby. Instead of enagaging in "vulgar bullying . . . bravado . . . [or] choleric hectoring," he simply asserts the principle of *assumpsit*, a chancery writ issued in cases of nonfeasance (non-performance) in the fifteenth century and later. Melville gives away his metaphor with a series of puns, first on the narrator's position as Master in Chancery: "I could not but highly plume myself on my masterly management in getting rid of Bartleby. Masterly I call it. . . ." Then he continues with a bravura punning performance within two paragraphs in which the words "assume" and "assumption" are repeated no less than eleven times.

The narrator at this point has proceeded about as far as literalism can take him into the principles of equity. When the "old Adam of resentment" rises in him against Bartleby, he recalls the "divine injunction: 'A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another.'" ¹¹ He invokes the idea of charity and determines to govern his relations with Bartleby through more than the literal reliance upon equity he has used to this point. He seeks solace through research in such non-common law works as "*Edwards on the Will* and *Priestley on Necessity*."¹² In this

¹⁰ Roscoe Pound, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Law* (New Haven, 1954), pp. 64-65; Newman, *Equity and Law*, pp. 56-58. To a layman the details are confusing, but there is a distinct difference between a plaintiff's rights "at law" and "in equity." Where law is concerned with the rigid form, "damages," equity uses the more idealistic term, "remedy." The distinction is basic.

¹¹ The equity-common law metaphor is apt for this extension into theology. The principles of equity may be described as relating to the principles of common law as the ideas of the New Testament relate to the ideas of the Old Testament.

¹² No critic has noticed that these very philosophic sounding titles are also perfectly appropriate as legal titles, especially for the purposes of equity pleading. All one need do is accept the pun on "will" as "testament" and "necessity" in its legal sense, as cause in hardship. Both terms were common to equity pleading at the time of the writing of the story.

manner he does achieve a stasis with Bartleby within the microcosm of the office. But external, societal influences—the opinions of his “professional acquaintances”—lead him to the extreme step of abandoning his offices and Bartleby. He thereby brings about the dénouement of the story, Bartleby’s imprisonment and death and his subsequent transcendence to the company of “kings and counselors [chancellors?],”¹³ the perfect haven for a test of equitable principles.

¹³ Widmer, *MFS*, VIII, 284, points out the probable source of the phrase in Job (3:14). The identification of “chancellor” with “counselor” is a piece of folk etymology, but it is not unknown.



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The Political Thought of David A. Wasson

DAVID A. WASSON (1823-27) WAS AN ESSAYIST, MINISTER, POET AND TRANSCENDENTALIST whose religious and political ideas reflect some of the major dilemmas of his age, though he has not been generally recognized as an important political theorist. The acceptance of the man and the publication of his articles in significant journals suggest that the conservative political ideas of this religious radical were not altogether rejected by his contemporaries. The North-South division has so long tended to infect the view of a liberal-conservative split in the middle of the nineteenth century that it is still noteworthy to discover a conservative theorist other than Brownson in the antislavery North. Wasson's conservatism is as strong as Calhoun's, though his ideas were not so well known. Measured against the criteria set forth by Kirk, for example, Wasson emerges as a conservative thinker according to present standards, though such a label does some disservice to one who thought of himself as radical in religion and politics.

Wasson's effort as a political thinker was to bring to the nineteenth century the idealistic bases of Puritan and Federalist political thought. Blind to some realities of the nineteenth century, Wasson was attempting to return politics to a religious base. Such an attempt to moralize the state was characteristic of transcendentalist thought, and this was one of the bonds between Wasson and other transcendentalists. Wasson was a friend of several members of this group, praised by Emerson who thought him an excellent contributor to the *Atlantic*, by Thomas Wentworth Higginson and by Theodore Parker. One of the chroniclers of the movement, Frank Preston Stearns, claims that Wasson's critics "always compared him with Emerson."¹ Wasson took Parker's pulpit for a time and was instrumental in forming the Free Religious Association. Among the

¹ *The Life and Public Services of George Luther Stearns* (Philadelphia, 1907), p. 220.

transcendentalists only Thoreau and Brownson were so concerned with the relation between man and state. Toward the end of his life Wasson spent several years working on a book he had tentatively entitled "Man and the State." It would have been the only volume of political theory written by a transcendentalist and as a statement of Wasson's social and political thought would have been one of the few works of conservative political theory written in the United States. It would scarcely have been purely political, however, since Wasson would infuse politics with religion.

The three main elements of Wasson's political philosophy are his beliefs in the basic equality of men and their potentiality for spiritual growth, the variant spiritual development of men and a principle of authority other than majority rule. It is immediately apparent that his political ideas had a religious basis, for his ideas of equality and growth were as much theological as political. A believer in "higher law," he attempted to construct a political theory which would insure the salvation of the nation, guaranteeing it the destiny he thought it was to have. Having grown up in a Calvinist home (his own description) and sharing the religion of the transcendentalists which had deep roots in Calvinism, he was prepared to look to the seventeenth century for a political model. (An interesting contrast is provided by Theodore Parker who looked only ahead to his ideal of an industrial democracy.) Wasson found among the Puritans a community which had been built on the secure foundation of authority which democracy lacked. Like most transcendentalists, he believed in man, in the divine elements within man, but he distrusted the judgment, particularly the political judgment, of men. He reconciled this paradox of belief and distrust by positing a disparate spiritual growth among men. The ideal state would be a religious community in which the authority would be the higher law as seen by those who had attained spiritual growth; the rest of the community had the duty to obey. Such a community would nurture spiritual growth in the individual to advance the good of the whole community.

A central belief for Wasson, as for other transcendentalists, was that man has within him a divine element. "Soul has roots that go direct into the very bosom of Eternal being," he wrote.² A corollary was that in every man the "spiritual element seeks to realize itself wholly." This meant that men were unequal, since the spiritual element developed to varying degrees in different men. This belief led him to write of "Spiritual rank" among men and to approve Ulysses' speech on degree in Shakespeare's

² David Atwood Wasson, *Essays: Religious, Social, Political*, ed. O. B. Frothingham (Boston, 1889), p. 208. (Hereafter cited in the text.)

*Troilus and Cressida.*³ This growth in the individual was promoted by society which Wasson called the creator of "heaven or hell, divine intelligence or brutish opacity, in the hearts and heads of men" (p. 265). The society which best promoted such growth was one held together by "a religious cohesion," one "wherein men religiously, divinely, spiritually cohere." Wasson pointed to early New England to demonstrate the force of religion in society. He suggested that the real beginnings of a national literature occurred there rather than in Virginia because it was there that "the religious element of social cohesion" was found, there that "this life-blood of the genius of the universe" ran through society (p. 278). Wasson's view of the relation between religion and society is similar to that expressed by T. S. Eliot when he describes "the culture of a people as an *incarnation* of its religion."⁴ In Wasson's ideal society religion, in the broadest sense, would bind the community together as well as provide the basis for authority and political power.

Russell Kirk remarks in *The Conservative Mind*, "Individualism is social atomism; conservatism is community of spirit. Men cannot exist without proper community. . . ."⁵ Wasson's views are similar. He valued community and opposed atomistic individualism. He wrote, "So far now as one is representative of absolute humanity, he is a Person; so far as, by an element peculiar to himself, he is contrasted with absolute humanity, he is an Individual." Wasson rejected atomistic individualism because it proclaimed man to be "insular, self-motived and inwardly unrelated" (p. 247). A man could achieve greatness, stature, only as a member of humanity, as a representative of men. Wasson opposed to individualism a doctrine of "individuality" which included "the ever-required correlation of community" (p. 253). He meant that the individual had to be part of the community to exist completely. Concerned always with society and great men, he believed, "when the individual is great, there is also to be found a high development of social structure" (p. 254). A man could achieve greatness only in those communities which fostered individuality. Most of the transcendentalists emphasized the individual and self-reliance and believed that society could only be improved if the individuals within it were improved. They denied the possibility of improving men through

³ The speech which Wasson called "the very gold of political wisdom" (p. 174) contains the lines,

Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark, what discord follows! . . .

⁴ *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* (New York, 1949), p. 32. On similarities between Wasson and Eliot, see Charles H. Foster, *Beyond Concord: Selected Writings of David Atwood Masson* (Bloomington, Ind., 1965), pp. 3, 49, 50. Despite my contribution of the bibliography to that volume, the present essay was substantially complete before I read Mr. Foster's excellent essay on Wasson.

⁵ (Chicago, 1953), p. 211.

institutions, while Wasson believed that men could only improve if they belonged to a proper community. Like Kirk, writing a hundred years after him, Wasson opposes the doctrine of individualism with another and argues for the place of man in community.

As Wasson knew, his ideals were similar to those of the Puritan commonwealth. (In the twentieth century, Russell Kirk writes "Puritanism is moral conservatism in its extreme form."⁶) Wasson's goal for society was "The idea of making a church of the community in all its civil and economic order." To him this did not mean democracy: "I have cast aside democracy and every one of its fundamental axioms" (p. 50). Instead, he chose "Republicanism." His biographer, O. B. Frothingham, explains,

It should be observed that Mr. Wasson makes a broad distinction between Democracy and Republicanism, the former professing faith in crude, the latter in cultivated human nature; the one representing individualism or the doctrine of the supremacy of character; the one standing for impulse, the other, reason; the one trust to passion, the other putting faith in conscience. (p. 121)

In 1872 Wasson made the distinction purely on political grounds.

Republicanism is my hope and ideal; Democracy arose from an attempt to flank the "divine right of kings" by attributing a right of the same character to the people indiscriminately. In our institutions and actual politics, the two—simply opposite in their fundamental principles—are mingled. They have been in conflict ever since 1790—the grand impulse to strict Democracy having been given by Thomas Jefferson.⁷

To this anti-Jeffersonian, universal suffrage and majority rule were particularly abhorrent. He declared himself "done forever" "With numerical majorities and the composition of sacred insight out of multiplied *et ceteras*." He believed in "the doctrine of brotherhood," but denied that it meant "a dead level of equal attractions," and urged that it should be tempered "with the doctrines of obedience and reverence" (pp. 50-51). He might have been thinking of Calhoun's statement, "The truth is,—the Government of the uncontrolled numerical majority, is but the *absolute and despotic form of popular governments . . .*"

Wasson seldom questioned the basic equality of men. "Every man born into this world has the right from God to make the most and best of his

⁶ Kirk, p. 220.

⁷ "The Declaration of Independence" [Letter to the editor], *Index*, III (Apr. 6, 1872), 110. Peterson describes Wasson as one of the New Hamiltonians as he wrote for the *North American Review* in 1874. (*The Jefferson Image in the American Mind* [New York, 1960], pp. 339-40.) Wasson was developing ideas he had first voiced twenty-five years earlier.

existence"⁸ His premise of the divinity in all men dictated this. But just as he considered there to be an attainable ideal relation between the individual and society (individuality), so he thought equality should be balanced with worth. "Now my judgment is, that either the truth of a common Manhood or the truth of spiritual Rank may be made primary in a State, and that with admirable results, provided it be duly allied and tempered with its opposite. For these opposites I hold to be correlative and polaric, each required by the other."⁹ The United States had accepted the truth of a common Manhood but not the truth of spiritual Rank. The closeness of Wasson's religious and political thought is demonstrated in a sermon of 1865 most appropriately given to Theodore Parker's old congregation where he wrote, "The underlying assumption of the radical faith is, that man is here on earth to be schooled in the art of living worthily; to build up and establish his spiritual being by faithfulness to its indwelling and inspired law."¹⁰ Wasson would make those who had developed spiritually the temporal leaders. His way of stating religious and political doctrine simultaneously illustrates how closely the two were seen by him. To designate political leaders from among the spiritual leaders is but one example. The reciprocal relation between religion and politics in which Wasson believed caused him to seek political reasons for the moral degradation he saw—"blundering, imbecility, fatuity, stolid cecity, peddling littleness, narrow interest, vice, folly, futility" (p. 51). Only by bringing government and religion into their proper relation could men and society be improved. Only when Americans realized that they must "put Duty before liberty and Quality before equality" would the state be placed on a proper basis.¹¹ Though Wasson's ideas are by no means identical to Theodore Parker's, there are remarkable similarities. Parker's view of a better society included a new alignment of government and religion subsumed by his "absolute religion."

One of the bases for the political problems, according to Wasson, was widespread suffrage. He thought suffrage should be a privilege rather than a right. Even during the Civil War he was willing to attack universal male suffrage, saying, "It is possible we may yet discover that universal suffrage can be a trifle too universal,—that it should pause a little short of the state prison."¹² He would have suffrage based on quality. When Wasson presented this type of argument to the Radical Club, Emerson and John Weiss, another transcendentalist, opposed him. Wasson would deny

⁸ David A. Wasson, "The Law of Costs," *Atlantic Monthly*, XI (Feb. 1863), 246.

⁹ David A. Wasson, "A Letter to Thomas Carlyle," *Atlantic Monthly*, XII (Oct. 1863), 499.

¹⁰ David A. Wasson, *The Radical Creed . . .* (Boston, 1865), p. 4.

¹¹ David A. Wasson, "Social Ideals," *Index*, III (Feb. 10, 1872), 44.

¹² Wasson, "A Letter to Thomas Carlyle," p. 503.

suffrage to Negroes, women and recent immigrants. He rejected immigrants because they were not citizens: "True citizenship of anything comes by the grace of God" (pp. 11-12). The immigrants, Wasson further charged, could not be part of the nation, part of its religion and nationality. (Eliot expresses a similar notion in his discussion of unity.) Though he accepted a doctrine of equality and supported the abolition of slavery, he continued to consider the Negro inferior. He developed an "intense antagonism to negro suffrage." According to Frothingham, "The verdict of history went, in his [Wasson's] judgment, heavily against the African, who does not appear to have founded any state, or initiated any movement of reform" (pp. 117-18). Wasson did, however, favor Negro suffrage during the war, but it then seemed important in abolishing slavery, which he could not favor, believing in the equality of men.

Suffrage, however, was secondary to the more important issue of authority. Suffrage and majority rule were antithetical to Wasson's doctrines of rule by a limited group. Rule by the majority meant arbitrary rule, the Jeffersonian "weathercock rule."¹³ In the United States, "The actual authority is always a makeshift, an expedient for the hour. . . ." (p. 178) whereas authority should come from above (p. 111). Government, Wasson argued, should not be founded "in an individual will or in the sum total of individual volitions"; not the people's will but their duty should be sovereign (pp. 169, 160). A government which rested "on the pretended privilege of subjective will" he denominated "anti-Republican," that is, democratic (p. 170). Authority should rest on "objective grounds." He explained, "All polity, all authority, proceeds immediately from human sentiment and intelligence; but its roots are in the height of the mind as the roots of the nerves are in the brain,—in that civilizing mind of the race, which is objective, and in contrast to the individual subjectivity of the will" (p. 171). The Puritan commonwealth, he thought, was one in which the individual, every individual, was subject to a higher authority.

There is much in Wasson's writing which is unclear or incomplete. The detection of those with significant spiritual growth, for example, is not discussed. The difference in size between the Massachusetts of the seventeenth century and that of the 1850s is not acknowledged, to say nothing of the difference in size of the nation. It is difficult to imagine how Wasson would have solved problems such as these. But his thought cannot be considered merely for its deficiencies. It must be recalled that Wasson stated his theories during a period known for its liberalism—at least in the North—rather than its conservatism. That Wasson's political

¹³ Peterson, p. 339.

theory is antidemocratic is least surprising; though he praised the Puritans for their communities, the men he praised—Washington, Ames, Hamilton and Jay—were Federalists. Wasson, writing from 1851 to 1887, bridged in time and in thought the space between Jeffersonian-Jacksonian democracy and the New Hamiltonian republicanism. Like many of the transcendentalists, he was led to distrust the wisdom of the electorate, but he went beyond them in attempting to formulate a coherent new system.

David Atwood Wasson was not a typical transcendentalist, though his ideas were at least tolerated by them, and his religion was shared by some of them. While most transcendentalists were content to criticize the government under which they lived, Wasson tried to build a system of political theory to moralize the nation. Though a response to the nineteenth century, it was in large part a seventeenth-century system modified by Federalism. Much like Brownson he sought authority beyond man's law, though he looked in a different direction and traveled a much straighter road. Like Brownson, too, he could not accept government by popular will. Dissatisfied with Unitarianism, he moved toward free thought; plagued by universal suffrage and majority rule, he turned to moral authority. In so doing Wasson expressed the doubts of many intellectuals of his age seeking a way out of the dilemma of liberal Christianity and liberal politics. One had led to pale Christianity, the other to the political crises of the 1850s. Wasson was one of the few who attempted to solve the dilemma, to push beyond the uneasy acceptance of moral and political equality.



Reviews

Conducted by Theodore Hornberger

Who Was Horatio? The Alger Myth and American Scholarship¹

UNTIL 1961, THE ONLY BOOK-LENGTH BIOGRAPHY OF HORATIO ALGER JR. WAS Herbert Mayes' *Alger: A Biography Without a Hero*. Written in the late 1920s, obviously under the influence of Lytton Strachey, Mayes' study presented the author of innumerable boys' books as a case of parental repression and neurotic infantilism, whose one ambition was to write a "great novel," an ambition for which he was woefully unqualified. The irony of Alger's life, according to Mayes, was that the creator of the "rags-to-riches" formula which became such an important part of the American dream of success was, himself, a failure in everything that he most wanted to do. Drawing heavily upon Alger's "diary," Mayes traced the problem to an overbearing father, a Unitarian preacher who insisted on training his son for the ministry almost from birth. Alger Sr., in Mayes' account, is a callous egotist, a Puritanical tyrant who somewhat resembles the fabulous Barrett of Wimpole Street. It was his fanatical plans for young Horatio which kept the boy from a normal boyhood, which forced him to turn for protection to his mother, and which made him, during his

¹ Articles and books discussed include Malcolm Cowley, "The Alger Story," *New Republic*, CXIII (Sept. 10, 1945), 319-20; Robert Falk, "Notes on the 'Higher Criticism' of Horatio Alger, Jr." *Arizona Quarterly*, XIX (Summer 1963), 151-67; Rychard Fink, "Horatio Alger as a Social Philosopher," an Introduction to *Ragged Dick and Mark, the Match Boy*, by Horatio Alger Jr. (Compass Books, 1962), pp. 5-31; Ralph D. Gardner, *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era* (Wayside Press, Mendota, Ill., 1964); Frank Gruber, *Horatio Alger, Jr., A Biography and Bibliography of The Best Selling Author of All Time* (Grover Jones Press, Los Angeles, 1961); Norman Holland, "Hobbling With Horatio, or the Uses of Literature," *Hudson Review*, XIX (Winter 1959), 549-57; Kenneth S. Lynn, *The Dream of Success: A Study of the Modern American Imagination* (Little, Brown & Co., 1955); Herbert R. Mayes, *Alger: A Biography Without A Hero* (Macy-Masius, New York, 1928); and John Tebbel, *From Rags to Riches: Horatio Alger and the American Dream* (The Macmillan Co., 1963). I should like also to state here my general indebtedness to the resumé of Alger scholarship and criticism contained in the article by Robert Falk listed above.

Some of this material, greatly condensed, appears in the Bibliographical Note to my "Horatio Alger Out West: A Marriage of Myths," written as an introduction to Alger's *The Young Miner; or, Tom Nelson in California* (The Book Club of California, San Francisco, 1965).

college years, give up his plans for marriage to a girl named Patience Stires.

In turning away from theological studies to a career as a hack writer of juvenile fiction, Alger finally rebelled against his father's tyranny, but, according to Mayes, the psychic scars of his hobbled childhood and his broken romance crippled him forever. Three years of bohemian life in Paris subsequently established a sexual pattern that was to dominate his life, a ceaseless quest for love that led him to a sequence of demanding, bullying women. It was this period, also, which fixed the pattern of Horatio's creative life, giving him ambition but no talent, hope but no awareness of his limitations. Becoming famous because of his best-selling boys' books, Horatio assumed that he had true creative genius, and persisted in that vain belief to his dying day.

Mayes' portrait is of a sad, shambling, shy little man who stumbled from one failure to another, his life a series of shabby embarrassments and heartbreaks ending in poverty and despair. Living much of the time in the New York Newsboys' Home, Alger was little more than a boy himself, and his one attempt at adult responsibility—the adoption of a Chinese child named Wing—ended with the death of the object of his affection: "The bitterness that that day welled up in Alger's heart was like a torrential flood of water upon a verdant shore. A part of the good of him was swept away and something like a tinge of spleen usurped its place. The fringes of his hair turned white that day. His eyes closed ever so slightly."

Despite the claptrap style, Mayes' book was accepted without question as authoritative. The evidence of the "secret diary" seemed unrefutable evidence that Alger was a Freudian study in repression, that his parables of success were exercises in wish-fulfillment. The book suited the temper of the times, which assumed that "Victorianism" was a synonym for prudery and hypocrisy, and which welcomed the revelations of debunking biographers like Strachey, Woodward and Gamaliel Bradford. It was not until 1945, in a review of a one-volume reissue of several Alger novels, that Malcolm Cowley suggested that the diary had never existed, and that much of Mayes' book was fiction. Mayes, by then editor of *McCall's*, did not answer Cowley's charge, and the diary has not yet come to light.

Nevertheless, when Kenneth Lynn published *The Dream of Success* ten years later, he accepted the authority of Mayes' biography, and used Alger's tragic life as a prelude to his study of how the worship of "the bitch-goddess Success" influenced Theodore Dreiser, Jack London and other American novelists of their generation, recreating the picture of a lonely, frustrated little man "pouring out all his dammed-up ambitions and repressed desires into more than a hundred novels and countless short

stories about adolescent boys who, beginning in poverty and obscurity, took the fabulous city of New York by storm." The repression theory also appealed to Norman Holland, whose article (in 1959) "Hobbling with Horatio, or the Uses of Literature," drew upon Mayes' book to abstract "an emotional cripple whose growth was twisted by the steady application of moral pressures in childhood," and for whom the writing of books was a means of surpassing his father while avoiding direct competition with him.

In 1961, however, there appeared Frank Gruber's *Horatio Alger, Jr.: A Biography and Bibliography of the Best Selling Author of All Time*. Gruber, an Alger collector, took the trouble to examine easily available evidence, and discovered that Mayes' account was "studded with . . . a vast number of factual errors and flights of the imagination." In gathering the materials of his own, very brief study, Gruber was "compelled to discard virtually everything in [Mayes'] book with one single exception, the date of his birth. Even the date of his death is wrong." Setting about to put things in order, Gruber stated the facts of Alger's colorless existence in eleven pages of close-clipped prose, completely discrediting the sensational elements of Mayes' biography. The three years that Alger was supposed to have spent in France, he actually spent in the Cambridge Divinity School. And as for "Wing": "if he did adopt such a boy in 1873, he must have left him at the Newsboys' Lodging House when he went to Europe in the fall of 1873 and remained abroad for almost a year."

"In extenuation" of Mayes, Gruber noted "I must say that if I had to write a full-length biography of Horatio Alger, Jr., I would myself be compelled to invent even more romantic and glamorous incidents than did Mayes to fill out the pages." For the truth of the matter, according to Gruber, is that Horatio Alger Jr. was a very dull man who wrote books which boys found exciting. He was a man to whom practically nothing ever happened.

Gruber's book, unfortunately, was privately printed in an edition of only 750 copies. It is not surprising then, that when Rychard Fink wrote his Introduction to a paperback reprint of *Ragged Dick* and *Mark the Match Boy* in 1962 he relied entirely on Mayes' biography for the details of Alger's life, thus perpetuating the hoax. It was only in 1963 that Gruber's account began to have an effect, for that year saw the publication of Robert Falk's "Notes on the 'Higher Criticism' of Horatio Alger, Jr.," an article which called attention to and accepted Gruber's findings. Abandoning the Freudian approach, Falk examined the pattern of Alger's fiction closely, and noted the relevance of Alger's "luck and pluck" formula to the terms of the Protestant Ethic, pointing out the misconceptions that most people have about Alger's message: "Back of

these adventitious accounts of youthful success lay an earlier and more genuine tradition of protestant piety and a less aggressive spirit of business enterprise than Alger's critics have been willing to recognize. . . . For the Alger hero success is the ultimate reward, but it is not the result of the benevolence of struggle and competition. Instead, he lives in virtue and obedience, pursuing his humble calling with resignation and hope until divine providence in the guise of a wealthy banker or philanthropist rewards him for his faith."²

In contrast to Falk's article, John Tebbel's *From Rags to Riches: Horatio Alger and the American Dream*, also published in 1963, continued the uncritical acceptance of Mayes. Tebbel, who has been Chairman of the Journalism Department at New York University as well as Director of the New York University Graduate Institute of Book Publishing, is a scholar with credentials, and one is hard put to explain his apparent unawareness of the bothersome question brought up by Cowley in 1945, to say nothing of the facts set down by Gruber in 1961. In an introductory note, Tebbel says of Mayes that "It is a tribute to the research he did at twenty-eight to note that it can hardly be improved upon nearly four decades later. The primary sources of Alger material are meager, indeed, but Mr. Mayes appears to have examined all of them, and no new original material has turned up in the intervening decades." It seems difficult to believe that this statement is based upon any appreciable amount of research, despite Tebbel's acknowledgment of indebtedness "to the staff members of the New York Public Library and The New York Historical Society . . . and to the critics and other literary figures who have so generously discussed with me the place of Horatio Alger, Jr., in the stream of American literature." Whoever these critics were, it is doubtful if Malcolm Cowley was among them.

As reprehensible as Tebbel's unquestioning acceptance of Mayes' dubious authority is the extent to which his own account is based upon the other's. One needs to have both books before him to gauge such matters, and room does not permit any extensive demonstration, but an example in kind gives some indication of the sort (if not the extent) of dependency involved:

Until he was seven [Horatio] had mute companions—only colored, wooden blocks—to play with. Yet the little mind, already impinged

² It should perhaps be added that much the same point is established in Professor Fink's introduction, mentioned above: "Horatio Alger as a Social Philosopher." The main concern here, however, is biographical, and Professor Fink's very interesting and able essay is chiefly philosophical in emphasis. Because of this, it is not at all injured by his acceptance of Mayes' authority. I cite Falk because of his reliance upon Gruber, but both writers come to similar conclusions about Alger and the Protestant Ethic.

upon by ministerial data, found solace in those hours when, alone, he could squat upon the floor and build. Some children work miracles with blocks. They raise bridges in an hour, and tunnels, even palaces and forts. Horatio specialized in towers. Over and over he built a tower of the same design, anticipating always a structure that would stand straight and proud, higher than his head, an impressive architecture. When the tower crumbled to the floor before its tall destiny was accomplished, the boy would gather the scattered segments and began again, uncomplainingly (Mayes, pp. 17-18).

. . . Horatio was unutterably lonely. He spent much of his early childhood building with large blocks, and no doubt a psychiatrist studying him at that stage would have derived further clues from the fact that he built the same structure again and again—towers which he erected block upon block until they toppled, whereupon he would quietly, unemotionally, start building them up again (Tebbel, p. 24).

Considering the fitness of Alger's block-building obsession to Mayes' thesis, one would expect that a careful scholar would regard it with circumspection. Of some incidental interest is Tebbel's imposition of a Freudian interpretation. Like Norman Holland, he has fallen into the trap of "discovering" a pattern which was carefully planted by Mayes.

In the year following the publication of Tebbel's book, there appeared Ralph D. Gardner's *Horatio Alger, or The American Hero Era*. Gardner, like Gruber an Alger collector, is an amateur scholar, and allowed himself the creative license which a more academic mind would have avoided: "Some situations," he declares in the Preface, "were dramatized and dialogue created, but always within the framework of existing facts." Before we censure Gardner, however, we should recall Gruber's hard-headed pronouncement—there just is not enough in Alger's life to warrant a full-scale mounting of the facts. Some invention is necessary to swell the events into a book, and Gardner, like Mayes, chose to embroider the outline of factual material by means of dramatic exposition. Unlike Mayes, he did not invent episodes out of whole cloth. The "facts" which he presents are verifiable, and are merely expanded by dramatization and dialogue—drawing occasionally upon Alger's books for setting and language.

However we may regard such techniques of amplification, if we consider the state of affairs into which Gardner's book was introduced, we must admit that his approach was particularly unfortunate. Equally unfortunate was his decision to leave out any apparatus of footnotes or location of sources. But the worst mistake which Gardner made was to note that "critics finding this treatment of the subject to be highly sympathetic are reminded it is done by an unabashedly enthusiastic admirer of the

author," an admission which left him open to the charge of "whitewash!" The charge was soon forthcoming: first in a nationally distributed weekly book review and then in a scholarly journal devoted to American literature. Both reviewers, comparing the matter-of-fact prose and stylish Freudianism of Tebbel to Gardner's "fictionalized," friendly manner, did not hesitate to discredit the latter. Ignorant of the facts of Alger's life, impressed perhaps by Tebbel's credentials, put off perhaps by Gardner's lack of them, these reviewers took style for content and gave Tebbel's rehash of Mayes' debunking biography full credit as truth.

Most of the book-trade journals, newspapers and collectors' magazines gave Gardner a friendly reception. Ironically, it was only where the "truth" is traditionally revered—in the academy and the critical establishment—that Tebbel's book passed as authoritative while Gardner's carefully researched study was discredited. This, despite the painstaking detective work involved in Gardner's chapter "Pen-Names, Ghosts, and Confusion," and his lengthy descriptive bibliography of Alger's works, a meticulously detailed piece of work which may be compared with Tebbel's list, a reprint of an early Gruber bibliography which appeared in the *Antiquarian Bookman* in 1948. Whatever his reaction to Gardner's dramatization and dialogue, no scholar interested in the history of American popular fiction can fail to be impressed by his concluding section, "Trials and Triumphs of An Alger Collector."

It is to Gardner's credit that he picks no quarrel with Mayes: alluding indirectly in his preface to Mayes' many errors, he merely passes over Patience Stires, the bohemian fling, the unfulfilled ambitions and the embarrassing love affairs without mention. His portrait of Horatio's father, on the other hand, necessarily demands comparison with Mayes' prototypal tyrant, and seems to be an attempt to arrive at a common-sense balance. Horatio Alger Sr. emerges as a stiff-necked preacher who did not lack affection for his son, respected if not loved by his congregations, and of sufficient popularity to be elected to the Massachusetts State Legislature. His desire that Horatio enter the ministry, however heartfelt, was no obsession, and although he may not be described as happy over his son's decision to abandon the church for writing, he seems to have accepted it in time. Perhaps one of the chief accomplishments of Gardner's account is his evocation of life in the Alger household, with the wholesome if inexpensive pleasures of country living, and the modest joys of a parish home. Of some interest, in this regard, is Alger's sister, Augusta, a creator of children's stories in her own right, and, in contrast to the shy Horatio, a creature of wit and charm. The emergence of this member of the family, scarcely mentioned by Mayes or Tebbel, suggests that the

atmosphere of the Alger home was not entirely hostile to art or animal spirits.

It is not easy to sum up Horatio Alger's character, for it contained certain unreconcilable contradictions: despite his apparent mildness, he was a complex man, a product of conflicting desires and forces. No doubt the constant pressure of his father's ambitions for him had its effect, but equally important were the many bouts with illness suffered during his youth, and his consequent dependence upon his mother and the other women of the household. Physically weak, he nonetheless seems to have had appreciable powers of will, virtually curing himself of a stammer by means of classroom oratory. And he did possess creative genius of a sort, for nothing else could explain the popular emergence of his books among the many others of a similar type which were published during the years following the Civil War.

Alger seems never to have aspired beyond the narrow range of his talents and the limits of fame accorded the writer of boys' books. He puttered through an uneventful life, occasionally bumping as if by accident into many of the great names of that showy period, but generally sticking to his writing desk. His chief diversion was the excitement provided by the events in the Newsboys' Home, the material from which he built his best-known stories. His travels abroad and a year-long trip to California seem to have left little impression upon him. He wrote mostly of New England country life, into which he was born, and of New York City life, where he spent most of his adult years.

There may be something to Mayes' thesis, despite the unorthodox way in which he set about to prove it. Alger's father was stern, and the repeated pattern of foster-fathers in his stories is suggestive. But the evidence gathered by Gardner suggests other alternatives: not only did Alger become a Dutch uncle to numerous newsboys, he actually adopted several of them, and helped them on their way to relative fortune if not fame. Mayes would have seen Alger in the foundling newsboy, but Alger may have seen himself in the rich patron, the (to him) modern equivalent of the Good Samaritan. As Robert Falk has suggested, Alger's books took their shape, not so much from patterns of repression and wish-fulfillment, as from Alger's Protestant heritage. Despite his refusal (or inability) to heed his father's wishes, Alger turned out to be one of the most effective preachers of the Protestant ideal since Benjamin Franklin.

Certain it is that in reading Alger's stories, one cannot fail to be impressed by the intense idealism of his parables, the selflessness of his heroes and the kindly benevolence of their patrons. It may have been a foolish vision, but it was not a pernicious one. It was compounded in part of folly and optimism, naiveté and piety, and it added to our culture the

force of Alger's faith in natural goodness. How ironic it is that a subsequent generation felt it necessary to invent a crippled personality in order to explain a "myth" that was in many ways a perversion of Alger's original message—a vision as pure, simple and childlike as the life of the author himself. To read Ralph Gardner's sympathetic treatment of that life is in some measure to recapture its essence, but to really experience it, one must return to Alger's wonderful world of virtue rewarded.

JOHN SEELYE, *University of California, Davis*

John Quidor in New York

EARLY IN EDITH WHARTON'S *House of Mirth* THE HEROINE MUSES, "AND Americana are horribly dull, I suppose?" "I should fancy so," comes the reply, "except to the historian." That Americana should have moved Americans not at all fifty years ago, and today be the subject of wide public interest is just one of the quixotic turns of our cultural history. Museums which scorned to purchase canvases by American painters now have whole wings given over to them. In this past year American painting has come into its own in New York City; first the Metropolitan Museum of Art held its huge retrospective exhibition with 435 canvases, and now (Nov. 2—Dec. 5) the Whitney Museum of American Art is showing the work of John Quidor (1801-81). The two shows, by their very contrasts, are companion pieces. The Quidor exhibition, with only twenty-one paintings by an all but unknown artist, is "little and pawky," but it serves very well to indicate that today even the special art of the connoisseur has found a place in the public domain.

The Quidor exhibition, which will travel,¹ was organized by Edward H. Dwight of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute in Utica. John Baur of the Whitney Museum, who plucked Quidor from oblivion through an exhibition which he arranged for the Brooklyn Museum twenty-three years ago, provides an introductory essay in the catalogue.

Quidor was an anomaly in his own day. His paintings were so unfashionable and unsuccessful that he made his living as a sign painter and painter of decorative panels for the engines of fire companies in New York City. The story is told that Engine Number 14 was adorned with one of Quidor's panels—a rendition of an Indian maiden parting

¹ Dec. 19-Jan. 23, the Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute; Feb. 6-March 6, the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery; March 20-April 24, the Albany Institute of History and Art.

from her lover while the Indian chief to whom she is betrothed approaches in his canoe—when its crew brawled with a rival company and let a building burn down. As penalty, Engine 14 was impounded by the City for a year, but the Quidor panel was removed for safekeeping. The story suggests one of the nice ironies of history, for while Quidor's fire engine panels may have incited to riot, his paintings barely attracted notice.

Formal painting early in the nineteenth century in America had rigorous dimensions. It was, categorically, realistic and given to landscape and portraiture. Quidor experimented with surreal effects and with groups of figures. It became his habit to use the literary works of Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper as the subjects of his paintings. Although the three men were contemporaries who lived and worked for long periods in New York City, there is no record that Quidor was ever known to either writer. Of the twenty-one paintings in the Whitney exhibition, sixteen are renditions of literary scenes by Cooper and Irving. So close is literature to the paintings that the several canvases still in their original frames show small plaques upon which Quidor inscribed the excerpt he was painting and the page of the book on which it could be found. The literary detail provided Quidor with subject matter, but it also left him free, as no living subject would, to develop the fancies of his own mind.

The earliest of these "literary paintings," are from Washington Irving's *Sketch Book*. "Ichabod Crane Pursued by the Headless Horseman" was painted in 1828, and a year later Quidor exhibited "The Return of Rip Van Winkle" at the newly founded National Academy of Design. The colors of the latter painting are predominantly the golden browns that became typical of Quidor's work. The canvas depicts Rip returning from the hills to the unfamiliar streets of his town. Irving had described Rip's confusion: "I fell asleep on the mountain, and they've changed my gun, and everything's changed, and I'm changed, and I can't tell what's my name, or who I am!" But nothing in Irving's story, which tells only of a crowded, genial scene, "an array of women and children at his heels," suggests the faces of the crowd that Quidor painted, their coarse curiosity, their vulgarity, their ugly deformity. The faces blur behind Rip, who dominates the composition more like a frenzied John Brown than any figure imagined by Washington Irving. His face and body show that his confusion is painful, his dislocation maddening.

In 1832 Quidor produced two canvases after Cooper—"Leatherstocking's Rescue" † and "Leatherstocking Meets the Law." The latter, taken from *The Pioneers*, is of interest chiefly for the poses of the figures,

† Not included in the exhibition.

Hiram Doolittle sprawled on the ground where he has been thrown by Natty Bumppo, Billy Kirby holding his sides with laughter and Natty himself holding his long rifle on the fallen Hiram. The scene is inelegant, the figures rudely comical.

The third painting of 1832 is the most dramatic. Entitled "The Money Diggers," it is a scene from Irving's *Tales of a Traveller*. Irving had written: "lo! by the expiring light of the fire he beheld . . . what appeared to be the grim visage of the drowned buccaneer, grinning hideously down upon him. Wolfert . . . let fall the lanthorn. . . . The negro leaped out of the hole, the doctor dropped his book and basket. . . . All was horror and confusion." Quidor's painting is this and more. The canvas is alive with movement; figures show arms akimbo, knees knocked, mouths agape. The landscape writhes with jagged rocks and twisted trees. Color is laid on in pure reds, greens, yellows and black. Knipperhausen, at the center of the painting, wears green spectacles that cast green shadows on his face. The Negro, a favorite figure with Quidor for showing rich and bizarre effects, is in the act of pulling himself out of the pit, one leg cast up over the edge. He appears to be thrown up by the earth itself. Wolfert Webber's arms are thrown wide as he starts with terror at the face peering at him over the hillock. Swift movement is arrested and the whole composition is taut with excitement.

In 1838, after a lapse of nine years, Quidor again used Irving as his subject, this time painting "A Battle Scene from KNICKERBOCKER'S HISTORY." In "Rip Van Winkle at Nicholas Vedder's Tavern," painted in 1839, Quidor created a somber, brooding Rip, seated amid the boisterous carousing of the taverners who guzzle, connive and coarsely flirt. Their movement and gestures accentuate Rip's inwardness and solitude. In "Antony Van Corlear brought into the Presence of Peter Stuyvesant," of the same year, Quidor again moved beyond Irving's text, adding figures of his own conception. The most original, as in the earlier painting, is a Negro, who starts with delight—or fright—at the blast of the trumpeter, and dances a wild jig.

In the middle period of his career, Quidor painted "Ichabod Crane at a Ball at the Van Tassel's Mansion" (1855), and then four canvases from *Tales of a Traveller*: "The Devil and Tom Walker" (1856), "Tom Walker's Flight" (1856) "Wolfert's Will" † (1856) and "Wolfert Webber at the Inn" (1857). The first is the best of the group. The colors have become subdued and blurred; the prevailing tone is amber. Ichabod himself is the miracle of the canvas. His body seems charged with galvanic energy and he dominates the other dancers who turn in grotesque gyra-

† Not included in the exhibition.



• *Rip Van Winkle at Nicholas Vedder's Tavern*, 1839.
Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



Antony Van Corlear Brought into the Presence of Peter Stuyvesant, c. 1839.
Courtesy, Munson-Williams-Proctor Institute, Utica.

tions to the strains of a leering fiddler. Katerina Van Tassel, the "fat partridge" of Irving's tale, is a buxom lass who twirls on her toes, and smiles an incredibly smug and homely smile.

From *The Knickerbocker History*, Quidor executed seven more paintings: "The Edict of William the Testy Against Tobacco" (1856), "Peter Stuyvesant Watching the Festivities on the Battery" † (1860), "The Embarkation from Communipaw" (1861), "A Knickerbocker Kitchen" (1865), "A Knickerbocker Tea Party" (1866), "Peter Stuyvesant's Journey Up the Hudson River" † (1866) and "Voyage to Hell Gate from Communipaw" † (1866?). The last canvases show considerably weaker conception and execution. Composition is hardly developed beyond the stage of sketch or cartoon. Color is washed on in thin glazes. Figures are merely outlined. But the original touches are still there: the cruelty of children tormenting a dog; the gluttony of dinner guests gorging on fat pork.

We know that Quidor tried farming, and failed; tried religious painting, and failed; tried landscape painting, and failed. But, like e. e. cummings' Uncle Sol "who was a born failure," Quidor finds some measure of success after death. Today we can recognize that his handling of figures in motion and his composition of figures are unique. In his preoccupation with folklore and literary source he was never simply derivative; invariably he added a new dimension to the tales. In almost every case, the details he provided recall Breugel the Elder, or Goya, or Daumier, rather than Washington Irving or Cooper. Although the paintings are often primitive and faulty, Quidor is well worth discovering.

LILLIAN SCHLISSEL, *Brooklyn College*

† Not included in the exhibition.

ROBERT E. SPILLER, *The Third Dimension: Studies in Literary History*. vii, 245 pp. Macmillan, 1965. \$5.95. Paper, \$2.45.

FIRST published at intervals from 1929 to 1963, the essays here assembled remind us of Professor Spiller's dedication over some three decades to literary historiography, his recurrent insistence that literary understanding requires the historical dimension to be complete, his longstanding interest in hypotheses that could help explain the distinctive features of American literary development, particularly in the nineteenth century.

The hypotheses that Professor Spiller advances are actually modest ones, such as that literary movements other than Realism shaped indigenous fiction and poetry importantly in the period 1870-1900, an argument unlikely to stir protests today but emphatically needing to be said in 1947, when the author proposed it. Tentative and preliminary many of the analyses in fact are, partly because of their occasional nature. Some were

originally addresses to foreign audiences, others ancillary to such larger efforts as the *Literary History of the United States*. Their chief virtues for most of us will probably lie in Professor Spiller's discernment of major problems which merit book-length inquiry by adventuresome scholars. For example, what qualities "distinguish American romanticism from its European analogues"? Now that the New Criticism has re-established the primacy of the work of art, what tasks should literary historians set themselves?

By their common topic these essays affirm "America"; but their methodological implications point outward toward comparative studies of our literature and culture with many others. Those studies are, embarrassingly, in their merest infancy.

DAVID R. WEIMER, *Rutgers University*

ALAN TRACHTENBERG, *Brooklyn Bridge: Fact and Symbol*. x, 182 pp. Oxford University Press, 1965. \$5.75.

MR. TRACHTENBERG gives us much valuable information about the Roeblings, the political problems of nineteenth-century New York and the design of suspension bridges. He makes the past concrete. But he also suggests that "facts" are "symbols." The shape of the Bridge or the conflict between "rainbow and grid" incarnates dialectical, transcendent processes: ". . . Brooklyn Bridge was in its creator's mind a principle of order. Representing nature's laws and man's history, the bridge subdued, in mind if not in fact, the implied chaos of millions of people making their separate ways across the river. It would give their passage a form, and link them in consciousness to their national destinies as Americans."

Mr. Trachtenberg, like many recent historians, sees America itself as a "culture of contradictions." By emphasizing oppositions throughout his stimulating book—he moves from the "history" to the "secret history" of the Bridge; he juxtaposes European and American "sources" and "shapes"; he contrasts the views of Henry James, Whitman, Marin, Stella and Hart Crane—he convinces us that our nation is structured by "two kingdoms" of force: the desirable (symbol?) and the possible (fact?). At times he strains to establish his pattern—his polarities are as neat as those of "machine and garden" or "virgin and non-virgin land." But he is not an obsessive designer.

Mr. Trachtenberg is able, finally, to demonstrate that there is no pure "objectivity"—Brooklyn Bridge, America and his own cultural history are vital because they *fuse* fact and symbol; they hold "a simultaneous grasp of the desirable and the possible."

IRVING MALIN, *City College of New York*

Innocence and Power: Individualism in Twentieth-Century America. Edited by Gordon Mills. x, 156 pp. University of Texas Press, 1965. \$4.75.

THIS is an expansion by minor revision and the addition of two essays of a symposium that originally appeared in the *Texas Quarterly*. Regrettably, the additional essays have not enriched the collection. There are contributions by specialists in history, government, economics, literature, anthropology and philosophy. The editor suggests that individualism "is in experience . . . a myriad of spokes in a wheel jolting over new ground." Unfortunately there is little evidence either of the unifying rim or the unifying hub of such a wheel. What is needed is a new synthesis and a workable interdisciplinary definition of individualism; however, neither the editor nor the contributors can be much blamed for failing to provide what no one else has managed. Yet one might have hoped to see an attempt to list the elements which may be said to constitute individualism: the elements which in a certain proportion or in their entirety may be found in all of the areas under consideration in such a symposium. The core assumptions, the essential concepts that are recognized as Individualism expressing itself in such diverse fields as art, economics, history, political science, need to be shown in their essential nature—a font, as it were, a "well-spring," a source that expresses itself as neo-classicism in economics, organic form in art and libertarianism in political science.

Louis Hartz attempts to associate "the narrower individualism out of which the norms of the nation had been created" to the New Deal and the Progressive tradition. He tends to see "Progressivism" as a finer new-individualism. David M. Potter's contribution is perhaps the richest and best in the book. It is comprehensive and judicious and suggests that what Mr. Hartz labels progressive individualism may be no more than a new-conformism.

Paul Samuelson's essay on economics is an excellent one. He properly relates individualism to neo-classicism and he presents with lucidity a cause and a philosophy in which he does not believe and can not avoid undercutting. He is able to assert that "not even an individual's perfections are his own; like his imperfections, they are group made." Mr. Ayers' essentially smart-alecky effusion suffers in comparison with that of his fellow economist as well as that of the other contributors. It seems informed by animus and a conscious superiority toward his subject matter as well as toward the wrong-thinkers as opposed to the right-thinkers of whom Mr. Ayers is a representative. Mr. Ayers' right-thinking leads him to believe that he has demonstrated that "Except in a very unimportant sense there is no such thing as individuality." The essays by David M. Potter, Paul Samuelson, Louis Hartz and Frederick J. Hoffman make

the volume worthwhile, and libraries would do well to order a copy; yet neither the editor nor his contributors seem clearly aware of the impressive scholarship of the neo-classicists nor of the landmark studies in this field by Ludwig von Mises, F. A. Hayek, Milton Friedman and David McCord Wright. Contributions from a von Mises, a Hayek, a Friedman might have enriched such a symposium. For example instead of two contributions from two anti-neoclassicists we might have had at least one contribution from a von Mises or a Milton Friedman or any one of a long list of scholarly neo-classicists.

ALEXANDER EVANOFF, *Indiana State University, Terre Haute*

EDWARD DIGBY BALZELL, *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America*. 492 pp. Illustrated. Random House, 1964. \$6.95.

WASPS—not the stinging insects, but the allegedly dominant group in American society—are the subject of this book, in which the author seeks to explain "How and why Anglo-Saxonism has lost its authority within our white community" (p. 383). After carefully defining his terms, Professor Baltzell maintains that the WASP elite (the top social class, be it good or bad) has lost its power because it has turned from an aristocracy (an elite which functions as the carrier of social values), as one finds it in Britain, into a caste (an elite which protects its vested interests but contributes nothing), as it exists on the Continent. The last time the old elite had its way was in the 1920s, when "the proper business establishment reigned supreme" but "failed to rule" (p. 217). In support of his thesis, the author considers the role of the elite in relation to the principal social institutions, especially clubs, corporations, colleges and politics. Far from advancing some program of downward leveling, he wants an upper class which will preserve what is good. The author warns, however, that upper-class institutions will be effective only if they are truly aristocratic, not mere strongholds of vested interests.

Unlike many modern sociological books, this work is eminently readable. But it is not without flaws. The use of italics to indicate quoted matter is disconcerting. The footnotes, arranged by chapter *numbers*, are almost inaccessible because the running heads of the pages contain chapter *titles*. Readily available material is taken from secondary sources, which may explain an amusing error in a quotation from an opinion by Justice Holmes. The author's discussion of the literature of the 1920s is superb, but his knowledge of history is somewhat deficient, for it is not true that "the Republicans remained the majority party" all the time from Lincoln through Hoover! Turning to the core of Professor Baltzell's

argument, one might ask whether clubs are as important as he implies and whether anti-Semitism is as widespread as he believes. Are political institutions really controlled by WASPS? In many eastern cities, where the political power is in the hands of a coalition of men of Irish and Italian extraction, the WASPS must be profoundly grateful for the crumbs that fall from their political masters' table.

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EMIL OBERHOLZER JR., *Llandaff, Wales*

MARGARET FARRAND THORP, *The Literary Sculptors*. x, 206 pp. Duke University Press, 1965. \$8.50.

MRS. THORP has written a useful and readable account of the first generation of American sculptors, beginning with Horatio Greenough's going to Rome in 1825 and concluding with the Centennial Exhibition of 1876. She has provided biographical sketches of the major artists (and in an Appendix brief notices of them all), descriptions of artist-life in Rome and Florence, and an account of types of art patronage available in America at the time. She has also treated in separate chapters the public attitude to nude statuary and the representation in marble of native American subjects—as well as the chief anomaly among the artists, William Rimmer, no "literary sculptor." Thus the book itself is less specialized than the title might imply.

Mrs. Thorp's name for this group of sculptors, moreover, seems questionable. They were inspired chiefly, she says, by "myths, legends, and historical events . . . recorded in prose and poetry." But so were many Europeans of the same period. At the same time, a notable number of works by these artists were not so inspired: Greenough's *Washington*, Powers' *Greek Slave* and John Rogers' groups, for example. As Mrs. Thorp so admirably demonstrates in every other aspect of her study, the achievement of these Americans was by no means narrow and not altogether derivative.

NATHALIA WRIGHT, *University of Tennessee*

MELVIN H. BERNSTEIN, *John Jay Chapman*. 144 pp. Twayne, 1964. \$3.50.

IN *The Triple Thinkers* (1938) Edmund Wilson lamented that too little attention was paid to John Jay Chapman by students of American literature and culture; the problem, he implied, was largely how to categorize an enthusiastic and prolific amateur. This lament is still timely, the recent exceptions being Richard Hovey's interpretive biography published in 1959 and Jacques Barzun's edition of Chapman's *Selected Writings*.

(1957). Melvin Bernstein's introductory study partially fills the need in reintroducing us to this militant political reformer, poet, editor, dramatist, friend of the great, biographer, essayist, literary critic and practical agitator.

In handling Chapman's life the book judiciously avoids psychoanalyzing an author whose obvious mental instability invites speculation. Mr. Bernstein's interpretation stems primarily from the essays by Wilson and Barzun, perhaps mostly from the former. For himself, he seems most pleased by Chapman's late-in-life turn toward a kind of uninstitutionalized Christianity: "Had Chapman finished his 'Retrospections,' it would certainly rank higher than *The Education of Henry Adams*. Adams yearned for an age of faith . . . ; but Chapman . . . could—and did—make the leap of faith."

If this study does not bristle with new ideas or present a new synthesis, we must nonetheless be thankful that another book on Chapman exists at all and that it is written with accuracy and lucidity. That it fails to capture all the excitement of its subject is unfortunate, but if it interests even a few to read the original writings then Chapman will provide all the fire himself.

MICHAEL J. HOFFMAN, *University of Pennsylvania*

THE ARTS IN EARLY AMERICAN HISTORY: NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDY. An Essay by Walter Muir Whitehill and a Bibliography by Wendell D. Garrett and Jane N. Garrett. 170 pp. University of North Carolina Press for Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1965. \$4.50.

ANYONE who wants to include materials on the arts in his study or teaching of American culture needs this book in his own library. The selected, annotated bibliography of 110 pages is confined to titles bearing on the arts up to 1826 only; but the introductory remarks by the Garretts furnish a brief history of the place American arts have, or until recently, have not had in our art history and social history. The bibliography covers architecture, painting, sculpture and crafts arranged into general works, works about individual artists, and works on regions. It should be noted that the regions include French Canada and the Maritime Provinces and the Spanish Southwest. The serial publications, while limited in number, have descriptions that are brief histories of the titles.

Many of the monographs listed were written by curators and collectors; however, the bibliography is designed for those who want to expand conventional interpretations of early American history. The Garretts hope that the gaps that they see in their bibliography will suggest profit-

able subjects for study. The listings of works on engraving, printing, bookmaking, medals, pottery, wall decoration and textiles will prompt many readers to expand what they see as the place of the arts in our culture.

Walter Muir Whitehill's essay, like the bibliography, grew out of a conference sponsored by the Institute of Early American History and Culture held at Williamsburg on March 7, 1964. Being a student of the history of art for a dozen years before turning for the last three decades to work in American history, Whitehill has the perspective which enables him to say where we are weak and where we are strong in our scholarship in American art. His comments on problems, organizations and publications in the field have incorporated into them suggestions from the distinguished participants in the conference. He wants to warn us of some booby traps that might beset our paths in using the arts in our work, and he succeeds.

Many today who want to use the arts as a part of their cultural studies have had little formal instruction in the arts. They need this book, for there is nothing comparable to it. It can be hoped that a work for the period after 1826 up to, say, the Philadelphia Centennial or the Columbian Exposition, will see the light of day. Unfortunately, we have no institutions comparable to the Institute or Winterthur to encourage such studies.

KENNETH J. LABUDDE, *University of Missouri at Kansas City*

JAMES M. MCPHERSON, *The Negro's Civil War: How American Negroes Felt and Acted During the War for the Union*. xvi, 358 pp. Pantheon Books, 1965. \$6.95.

I. A. NEWBY, *Jim Crow's Defense: Anti-Negro Thought in America, 1900-1930*. xvi, 230 pp. Louisiana State University Press, 1965. \$6.50.

SETH M. SCHEINER, *Negro Mecca: A History of the Negro in New York City, 1865-1920*. x, 264 pp. New York University Press, 1965. \$6.50.

DESPITE protestations about historical materials heretofore "overlooked," "neglected," etc., the authors of these works reveal nothing startlingly new about the Negro in America. What they do manage to convey, however, is a vivid sense of the present in the past. Scheiner's study, for example, reaffirms, if nothing else, that Jim Crow practices with all their attendant ills—police brutality, crime, poverty, unemployment—were as endemic in the ante-bellum North as they have been in the latter-day South—and Negroes have been protesting these injustices since post-Revolutionary days. Newby, on the other hand, reveals that anti-Negro

sentiments are mere recapitulations of McPherson's Civil War racism—with some neo-Darwinist and pseudo-scientific refinements.

By far the best of the three studies is McPherson's. In part the reason lies in the copious citations—newspapers, books, speeches, correspondence, pamphlets—that the author judiciously integrates into his narrative. The Negro's shifting fortunes, North and South, as the war progressed, his political attitudes and his significant military and economic contributions on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line are carefully considered. Both as an exhaustive source study for material relating to its subject and as straightforward historical reportage, this book serves its purpose well.

Newby's study identifies a variety of anti-Negro views ranging from extremist to moderate—and the application of these views to the caste apparatus of post-Civil War local and state governments. Perhaps most instructive is the author's contention that racism has never been the exclusive province of poor southern whites, demagogues and status-seeking immigrants—but has gained general acceptance among *all* classes of whites, respected intellectuals, artists and reformers included. The decline of systematic racism, Newby feels, is in part the failure of racists to agree on any common feasible solution for what they came to regard as the Negro problem.

Scheiner's history of the New York Negro is almost a case study of the working out of anti-Negro attitudes. Derived in part from James Weldon Johnson's and Claude McKay's earlier studies, Scheiner's work is more thoroughly researched, if considerably less readable. Scheiner focuses most of his attention on the demographic, political and economic aspects of the Negro's sojourn in New York. Considerable emphasis is placed on the Negro's relationship to the white community—especially newly arrived immigrant and minority groups. He is weakest on Negro society and culture, devoting only one not altogether accurate chapter to what one would think is most revealing about the life of the New York Negro.

In a curious way these three books complement one another. What emerges ultimately, of course, is not that racism is a particular condition of time or place, but that it is a malaise deeply embedded in the very life and texture of American civilization. None of the authors attempts to arrive at underlying causes. At best, they offer tentative suggestions—political, social and economic. Perhaps some day an historian will come along who endeavors to synthesize the psychological disciplines with traditional historians' lore. Cash's *Mind of the South* was a good beginning. But who has followed?

EDWARD MARGOLIES, Staten Island Community College

BRYANT M. FRENCH, *Mark Twain and The Gilded Age*. 379 pp. Southern Methodist University Press, 1965. \$6.95.

MR. FRENCH has assiduously collected almost all the facts about *The Gilded Age* that one could conceivably find, or want to find. For details about the plans for its publication as an American Publishing Company subscription book, about the measures taken to assure British copyright and the money therefrom, about the form of the existing manuscript and the precise contributions of Warner and of Clemens to each part, about the originals of Laura and Senator Dilworthy and most of the other characters and events, about the way in which many incidents reflect Clemens' family life and other early experiences, and about the reception of the novel by the reviewers—for full details about all these particular matters, this book will surely satisfy the most exigent teacher who wants specific facts for the classroom or the Mark Twain enthusiast who can never have information enough about his idol.

Actually, Mr. French tells us little that is new. The great contribution of his book is to bring together all the scattered information about *The Gilded Age*, and to add just a bit more on every point. He works out the Clemens-Warner collaboration more precisely than it had been done before; he adds a few more keys to what we had known about the novel as a *roman à clef*. Against detractors, contemporaneous and later, he argues well the novel's merits as political and economic criticism, comparing it favorably with the few tentative efforts at the social novel to appear in the 1870s. And he presents evidence to convince me, as I had not been convinced before, that the sentimental and melodramatic grotesqueries of the book are in large part intentional; they are meant as burlesques of the popular fiction of the time.

JOHN LYDENBERG, *Hobart & William Smith Colleges*

ALFRED OWEN ALDRIDGE, *Benjamin Franklin, Philosopher and Man*, xii, 438 pp. J. B. Lippincott, 1965. \$7.95.

PAUL W. CONNER, *Poor Richard's Politicks, Benjamin Franklin and His New American Order*, xiv, 285 pp. Oxford University Press, 1965. \$6.50.

THE appearance of a new full-length biography of Benjamin Franklin, following close on the heels of the recently published manuscript edition of the autobiography, must surely indicate the arrival of flood tide in the current Franklin revival. Professor Aldridge's new volume shows clearly the diligence with which he has done long-standing research on many aspects of this eminent colonial figure. Well qualified to undertake this ambitious task, in which he follows the trail blazing of Carl Van Doren,

Aldridge tidies up many little patches of undergrowth that have come under scrutiny during the past twenty-seven years, his purpose being to "bring up to date all essential aspects of the story of Franklin's life while emphasizing the man himself."

Areas of the man that Aldridge throws new light on include Franklin's "lustiness, his acknowledged vanity, and his occasional callousness toward fellow human beings," traits which sometimes led him into inconsistencies. We read, for example, that his "celebrated frugality existed more in word than in deed," that he "became noted for conviviality . . . in an age of heavy alcoholic indulgence." At one time he might exhibit true "benignity of mind"; at another, an ultra-reactionary attitude toward social reform. Clever at pulling strings behind the scene, he was perfectly willing to exploit the political writer John Webbe in the incident of the founding of the *General Magazine and Historical Chronicle*. Franklin's "blatant moralizing and sly ribaldry," his unashamed nepotism, his acquisitive materialism resting cheek and jowl next his broad humanitarianism—all these show him not only complexly human but also downright sinful at times. Aldridge presents much new material, and the book impresses one as thoroughly reliable, a good one to consult for the very latest facts on Franklin.

A more specialized but nonetheless well-thought-out and well-unified view of Franklin's general political theory appears in Mr. Conner's book. Conner sets up an interesting three-part thesis which he calls Franklin's "New American Order": 1) "the Virtuous Order," in which self-interest would be supplanted by "solicitous mutual concern"; 2) "the Evolving Order," in which the science of politics would be perfected as America expanded in population and moved westward; 3) "the Harmonious Order," in which egalitarian individualism would be balanced by "the cohesive principle of unified authority," proceeding toward "virtuous social evolution." Tightly organized and well written, Conner's book concludes with the surprising speculation that today "Moscow . . . might be more congenial to a reincarnate Franklin than modern Philadelphia."

RICHARD E. AMACHER, Auburn University

American Calendar

Winter



1965

REGIONS. Not all ASA members are aware that the Association is divided into six regions, and that the chapters constitute subdivisions of these regions. A council member is elected from each region, by direct vote, and represents his region for a period of three years. Because the national office is trying to tighten up communication within the Association, and hopes to do so partly through emphasizing to the individual chapters the potential for affiliation with other chapters within their region, the present "American Calendar" will devote some space to a breakdown of regional activity.

SOUTH. The South is represented on the council by John Q. Anderson, Texas A. & M. University (elected 1964), and consists of four chapters: the Southeastern American Studies Association, covering North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida and Alabama; the Kentucky-Tennessee American Studies Association; the American Studies Association of Texas; and the Am-

erican Studies Association of the Lower Mississippi, including Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. Chapter officers are listed on the back cover of *American Quarterly*.

SEASA. The Southeastern chapter, which will meet next at the University of Georgia, in Athens, April 21-23, 1966, held a joint session with the South Atlantic Modern Language Association on Nov. 6, in Atlanta. Richard C. Lyon, University of North Carolina, was chairman, presiding chairman was C. Carroll Hollis, also of North Carolina, and the topic was "Naturalism and the Genteel Tradition." Four papers were presented: Robert D. Jacobs, University of Kentucky, "The Ethics of an Aesthete: Lambert Strether's Moral Choice"; Richard C. Lyon, "Santayana and Justice Holmes"; Louis D. Rubin Jr., Hollins College, "The Mencken Manner"; and Alan Trachtenberg, Pennsylvania State University, "Toward the City: From Gentility to Naturalism."

The chapter secretary, Gerald E.

Critoph, Stetson University, DeLand, Florida, edits a newsletter to which contributions are invited.

KY.-TENN. The Kentucky-Tennessee chapter holds a spring meeting annually. A newsletter is edited by Robert L. White, secretary, at the University of Kentucky.

TEXAS. The Texas chapter meets each December. Its newsletter is edited by secretary Charles W. Hagelman Jr., Lamar State College of Technology, Beaumont.

LOWER MISS. The Lower Mississippi chapter held a joint session with the South Central Modern Language Association Nov. 4, in New Orleans. The theme was "The History and Aesthetics of Drama in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana." A panel discussion presided over by Paul T. Nolan, University of Southwestern Louisiana, analyzed "Drama in the Lower Mississippi Valley." Members of the panel were Paul Hostetler, Tulane University; Stocker Fontelieu, Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré; and Beverley Peery, Louisiana State University in New Orleans. "A New Dialogue of the Theatre" was presented by Margaret Mary Young and John Wray Young, Shreveport Little Theatre, and scenes from Dion Boucicault's *The Octoroon*, directed by August W. Staub, Louisiana State University in New Orleans, were presented by students from LSUNO. New officers, elected

at a business session, are: George L. Sixby, Southern State College, president; Paul T. Nolan, vice-president; John Pilkington, University of Mississippi, secretary-treasurer. Professor Pilkington edits a newsletter for the chapter.

The *Mississippi Quarterly, A Journal of Southern Culture*, edited by Robert B. Holland, Mississippi State University, is an important part of the activity of this chapter area. Volume XVIII, No. 3, Summer 1965, is available free to ASA members on request. It is about eighty pages and is a single monograph by Gordon Price-Stephens, "The British Reception of William Faulkner, 1929-1962." An appendix contains a checklist of Faulkner's books published in England, and a list of book reviews.

FAR WEST. The Far West is represented on the council by Wilson O. Clough, University of Wyoming (elected 1964), and consists of four chapters: the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association, covering Oregon and Washington; the Southern California ASA, covering the state south of the Fresno area; the Northern California ASA; and the Rocky Mountain ASA, covering Colorado, Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Wyoming, New Mexico, Nevada and Montana.

PACIFIC NORTHWEST. The Pacific Northwest chapter has been active recently only in the form of a subchapter, located at Wash-

ton State University, at Pullman. Members in this chapter area are urged to write to the national office with reports on American Studies activities and with suggestions for Association development. The Pullman subchapter held two meetings this fall: on Oct. 12 Robert Sterling and Larry A. Gorgen of Washington State jointly presented an exhibition on American Art History, using the resources of a 1500-slide Carnegie Collection; on Nov. 11 a meeting centered around a public lecture by Frederick J. Hoffman, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, "The 1920's Reconsidered." The Washington State University quarterly *Research Studies* publishes an annual American Studies issue.

The ASA executive secretary will visit the Pacific Northwest area in early January 1966, to study problems related to American Studies there.

S. CALIF. The Southern California chapter held its fall meeting Nov. 20 at the University of California, Riverside. The theme of the meeting was "The Machine in the Garden of California." The principal speaker was Raymond F. Dasmann, author of *The Destruction of California*. A panel discussion was led by John A. Vieg, author of *Government and Politics of California*. New chapter officers elected last spring are: Dennis F. Strong, University of California, Riverside, president; Charles R. Metzger, Uni-

versity of Southern California, Los Angeles, vice-president; Allen Brownsword, California State College at Long Beach, secretary-treasurer.

N. CALIF. The Northern California chapter will have a meeting in 1965 to announce a new slate of officers. The area was visited by two national officers in 1965, and plans for a rejuvenation of activity are promised.

ROCKY MT. The Rocky Mountain chapter met in May at the University of Colorado, and elected Charles Nilon, University of Colorado, president; B. June West, Eastern New Mexico University, vice-president; and Joseph Gordon, Colorado College, secretary-treasurer. The spring 1966 meeting will be coordinated with the Rocky Mountain Social Science Association.

NORTHEAST. The Northeast region is represented on the council by Arthur Mann, Smith College (elected 1965), and consists of two chapters: the New England American Studies Association, covering Massachusetts, Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, New Hampshire and Vermont; and the New York Metropolitan ASA, covering New York City and suburbs, including northern New Jersey.

NEASA. The New England chapter meets each fall. The most recent meeting will be reported in a later issue.

N. Y. MET. The Metropolitan chapter met most recently on Nov. 19, at Adelphi University, to consider "Some Problems in American Biography." The meeting took the form of a symposium, moderated by Robert Ernest, Adelphi. Speakers were Charles Garrett, C. W. Post College, "Problems in Researching and Writing *The La Guardia Years*"; Marvin Gettleman, Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, "Problems in Writing a Biography of John H. Finley"; and Arthur Wayne Brown, Adelphi, "The Differing Problems in . . . Biographies of William Ellery Channing and Margaret Fuller." A discussion was led by Henry Wasser, C.C.N.Y. Newly elected officers are: Sidney Ditzion, C.C.N.Y., president; Frederick Kershner, Teacher's College, Columbia University, secretary-treasurer; Grace Nutley, Brooklyn College, council member.

MISS. VALLEY. The Mississippi Valley region is represented on the council by J. C. Levenson, University of Minnesota (elected 1965), and consists of three chapters: the Midcontinent American Studies Association, covering Missouri, Iowa, Southern Illinois, Kansas, Oklahoma and Nebraska; the Wisconsin-Northern Illinois chapter; and the Minnesota-Dakotas chapter.

MIDCONT. The Midcontinent chapter meets annually in the spring. Its 1966 meeting will be held at the University of Missouri,

probably in conjunction with a meeting of teachers of history. The chapter publishes a *Journal*, edited by Stuart Levine, University of Kansas, and has recently taken the lead in organizing a plan for an independent national meeting of ASA. The chapter regularly stages joint meetings with other societies.

WIS.-N. ILL. The Wisconsin-Northern Illinois chapter held its last meeting on April 10, at the University of Wisconsin, in Madison. A program of four papers was presented: Paul Schmunk, Wisconsin State College, Whitewater, "The Early Cultural Relationships of Spiritualism"; Walter Peterson, Lawrence University, "The Gospel of Poverty: The Message of Conservative Protestantism to the Poor at the Turn of the Century"; John G. Cawelti, University of Chicago, "America on Display: A Comparative Discussion of the World's Fairs of 1876, 1893, 1933"; and J. Iverne Dowie, Augustana College, "The Two Worlds of George Malcom Stephenson: The American Dream and Twentieth Century Reality." Chapter officers elected for 1965-66 were: Edward Noyes, Wisconsin State University, Oshkosh, president; Archibald Byrne, Northwestern University, vice-president; Peter Coleman, Wisconsin State Historical Society, secretary-treasurer.

MINN.-DAKOTAS. The chapter meets in the spring each year. All three chapters in the region are

combining to host an ASA party on Dec. 28, at the MLA meetings in Chicago.

GREAT LAKES. The Great Lakes region is represented on the council by Thomas F. Marshall, Kent State University (elected 1965), and includes three chapters: Michigan, Ohio-Indiana, and New York State (outside the New York City area).

MICH. The most recent meeting of the Michigan chapter was held in conjunction with the Ohio-Indiana chapter on Nov. 6, at Michigan State University. The theme was "Arts in America: Some Perspectives," and the following papers were presented: Sadayoshi Omoto, M.S.U., "Thomas Worthington Whittredge, the Painter Who Stayed Home"; Garnett McCoy and William Agee, Detroit Archives of Art, "Documents in the Arts"; Alex Butler, M.S.U., "Mies van der Rohe and Seagram's Whiskey: Reflections on the International Style Today"; David Klein, M.S.U., "When Publishers Go Public"; and Doug Phillips, Stained Glass Studio, Inc., Cleveland, "Stained Glass: the Business Community and the Artist." A panel discussion on "Pop and Op Art: Whither and Whence?" was moderated by Don Hausdorff, M.S.U., and had as participants: Ken Davidson, Heidelberg College; Charles Pollock, M.S.U.; Thomas Wallace, M.S.U.; and Sister M. Aquin, Aquinas College. Paul Love, M.S.U., acted as host at a visit to

the Kresge Art Center. Local arrangements were by George Landdon, M.S.U.

John Forman, M.S.U., has replaced Frederick Feied, M.S.U., as chapter secretary-treasurer. Professor Feied is on leave.

M.S.U.'s subchapter publishes a newsletter, edited by Gary Groat.

OHIO-IND. The Ohio-Indiana chapter holds two meetings a year, in spring and fall. This fall the meeting was with the Michigan chapter.

N.Y. STATE. The New York State chapter meets each fall and spring. The most recent meeting was Oct. 30, at Le Moyne College, on "Megalopolis." Four papers were presented: Irving Foladare, State University College, Buffalo, "The Clustering Effect on Voting Behavior in Buffalo"; Blake McKelney, Rochester City Historian, "The Neighborhood Organization Program in Historical Perspective"; Webb Fiser, State University at Albany, "The Utility of Utopia"; and John Searles, Director of the Syracuse Metropolitan Development Association, "What Is Happening to Our Downtowns?" Chapter president Kendall Birr, State University at Albany, presided at the dinner session, while William J. Lowe, Clarkson College, chapter vice-president, chaired the afternoon session. New officers elected were: William J. Lowe, president; Walter Hardig, Geneseo State, vice-president;

and Paul Goodwin, Oswego State, secretary-treasurer. Eric Brunger, State University College, Buffalo, stepped down as secretary-treasurer, after nearly a decade of service, and was afforded a standing ovation.

The chapter publishes a newsletter edited by Lionel Wyld, State University College, Buffalo.

MIDDLE ATLANTIC. The Middle Atlantic region is represented on the council by Robert E. Spiller, University of Pennsylvania (elected 1963), and consists of two chapters: the American Studies Association of the Middle Atlantic States, covering Pennsylvania, Delaware and Southern New Jersey; and the Chesapeake chapter, covering Washington, D. C., Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia.

The Middle Atlantic chapter has been staging a series of intra-chapter meetings, the most recent of which was at Edinboro State College, Edinboro, Pa. on Oct. 30. The meeting was devoted to an analysis of "American Literature: A Televised Approach," and studied the television program which John L. Marsh, Edinboro, with his colleague John Dove, has created. The program studies American Literature from an American Studies point of view. The 700 students, mostly sophomores, who are enrolled employ as one of their tools the bibliographical issue of *AQ*. The text for the course is *American Literature, A Televised Approach*, by Professors Marsh and Dove.

The chapter publishes a newsletter, edited by George P. Winston, Lafayette College, chapter president. Four meetings are planned for the current academic year.

CHESAPEAKE. The Chesapeake chapter meets twice a year, spring and fall, and their most recent gathering took place Nov. 21.

* * *

Comments and suggestions from members concerning the organizational structure of ASA are invited.

WHA-ASA. A joint session was held with the Western History Association Oct. 16, at Helena, Montana. The session on "Religion in the West," was chaired by Edwin S. Gaustad, University of California, Riverside, and featured two papers: W. L. Davis, S.J., Gonzaga University, "On the Trail of Father DeSmit"; and Leonard J. Arrington, Utah State University, "The Secularization of Mormon History and Culture." Commentators were John Tracy Ellis, University of San Francisco, and Robert V. Hine, University of California, Riverside.

BAAS. The *Bulletin of the British Association for American Studies*, New Series, Number 10, June 1965, features the following articles: Geoffrey Seed, "The Democratic Ideas of James Wilson: a Reappraisal"; C. L. Mowat, "A Study of Bias in British and American History Textbooks"; G. Dekker, "The Pathfinder: Leatherstocking in

Love"; and J. J. Healy, "The *Dial* and the Revolution in Poetry 1912-1917: A Study in Controversy."

IN BRIEF. The ACLS has issued a statement on copyright revision which was presented to a subcommittee of the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives Aug. 5, 1965. A summary of ACLS testimony will appear in a forthcoming issue of its *Newsletter*. . . . The John Carter Brown Library Fellowships for 1966-67, providing fellowships to study the Library's collection of books relating to America printed during the Colonial period, have a deadline of Feb. 1, 1966. Write for information to the John Carter Brown Library, Brown University. . . . *American Studies in India*, consisting of the Proceedings of the inauguration of the American Studies Research Centre at Osmania University, Hyderabad, on April 4, 1964, has been published by the USIS at New Delhi. . . . The Centre at Hyderabad has just released its sixth newsletter, dated Oct. 1965.

A newsletter by Roy Avery has just appeared, summarizing the pa-

pers given at the British Association of American Studies Conference at Leeds, in April 1965. . . . The University of London, with a grant from the USIS, will establish an Institute of American Studies, during the course of the current academic year. . . . The Smithsonian Institution and George Washington University have announced a joint doctoral program in American Studies, scheduled to begin in the fall of 1966. . . . Paul G. Sifton, formerly historian with Independence National Historical Park, has been appointed specialist in American Cultural History, Manuscript Division, The Library of Congress. . . . The European American Studies Association held its 1965 conference at Aarhus, Denmark, Aug. 15-18. About two hundred persons attended, representing 19 countries — 15 European nations, Algeria, Israel, Canada and the United States. George R. Taylor was the ASA delegate. His report on the Conference was put at the disposal of the Committee on International Exchange of Persons, *American Studies News*, where a detailed report on the Conference may be found. . . . R.F.L.



AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

REGIONAL SOCIETIES

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- ASA OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI. George L. Sixby, Southern State College, Magnolia, Ark., President. John Pilkington Jr., University of Mississippi, University, Secretary-Treasurer.
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- ROCKY MOUNTAIN ASA. Charles Nilan, University of Colorado, President. Joseph Gordon, Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Secretary-Treasurer.
- SOUTHEASTERN ASA. Clarence Mondale, University of Alabama, University, President. Gerald E. Critoph, Stetson University, DeLand, Fla., Secretary-Treasurer.
- SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER OF ASA. Dennis F. Strong, University of California, Riverside, President. Allen Brownsword, California State College, Long Beach, Secretary-Treasurer.
- ASA OF TEXAS. David Van Tassel, University of Texas, Austin, President. Charles W. Hagelman Jr., Lamar State College, Beaumont, Secretary-Treasurer.
- ASA OF WISCONSIN AND NORTHERN ILLINOIS. Edward Noyes, Wisconsin State University, Oshkosh, President. Peter Coleman, Wisconsin State Historical Society, Secretary-Treasurer.

THE AMERICAN STUDIES ASSOCIATION

with the MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION

Tuesday, December 28, 1:15 P.M.

Palmer House, Red Lacquer Room, Chicago, Illinois

Session: "The Modern American Writer and the Cultural Experience"

Chairman: HENNIG COHEN, University of Pennsylvania

Speakers: JOHN CHEEVER, Ossining, New York

RALPH ELLISON, New York City

NORMAN MAILER, Brooklyn, New York

Reception: Sponsored by the Mississippi Valley Region of ASA

Tuesday, December 28, 4:30-6:30 P.M.

Palmer House, Chicago Room

Luncheon: Jointly Sponsored by the American Literature Group of MLA

Wednesday, December 29, 12:45 P.M.

Speaker: IRVING STONE

Palmer House, Adams Room

with the AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Wednesday, December 29, 9:30 A.M.

Hilton Hotel, Parlor 6, San Francisco, California

Session: "Russian Views of American Society in the Twentieth Century"

Chairman: WARREN B. WALSH, Syracuse University

Speakers: L. JAY OLIVA, New York University,

"Maxim Gorky in America, 1906"

CHARLES A. MOSER, Yale University,

"Vladimir Mayakovsky in America, 1925"

Commentators: HOWARD H. QUINT, University of Massachusetts

GERALD FRIEDBERG, University of California, Davis